DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 330 729 UD 027 359

TITLE A Chance for Every Child: Oakland's Infants, Children, and Youth at Risk for Persistent Poverty.
INSTITUTION Urban Strategies Council, Oakland, CA.
PUB DATE Feb 88
NOTE 74p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Access to Education; Adolescents; *At Risk Persons; *Child Health; Children; *Disadvantaged Youth; Elementary Secondary Education; Family Income; Infants; *Low Income Groups; Minority Groups; *Poverty; Urban Problems; Youth Opportunities
IDENTIFIERS *California (Oakland)

ABSTRACT

This report explores the risks that threaten to trap children in Oakland (California) in a cycle of persistent poverty. It examines the factors that may lead to lives of continued poverty: being a member of a poor family and having a dangerously low weight at birth, not having access to quality education and training, and spending the formative teenage years idle. The report contends that substantial improvements in family income, child health, education and training, and youth opportunity will greatly increase the chances for Oakland's children to escape from the poverty cycle. The document is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1, "Poverty in Oakland," examines the growing number of poor, especially children, in the city. Chapter 2, "Families," discusses female-headed households in poverty, shrinking opportunities available to men and women during the childbearing years, and the increasing concentration of the poor in poor neighborhoods. Chapter 3, "Infancy and Childhood," reports on infant mortality and low birth weight trends, lack of access to preschool programs, and poor minority children in Oakland's schools. Chapter 4, "Adolescence," explores signs of persistent poverty among youth. The report includes statistical data in 28 tables, a list of 17 references, three maps, and four transparencies. (AF)

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A CHANCE FOR EVERY CHILD:

Oakland's Infants, Children, and Youth at Risk for Persistent Poverty

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A Report by the Urban Strategies Council

Oakland, California
February, 1988

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Mission Statement

The Urban Strategies Council is an Oakland based non-profit resource/policy group. The following is a statement of the Council's mission:

The mission of the Urban Strategies Council is to involve key sectors of the Oakland area community in comprehensive focused initiatives aimed at reducing urban persistent poverty. These initiatives will seek to increase the incomes of poor women and men heading families to expand their opportunities; improve community health so individual options are not limited; improve educational opportunities for citizens at risk to provide all with the basics to compete and be productive; and insure that training, employment, and other opportunities are made available, especially to the youth, to enable them to approach adulthood with empowerment and direction.

To accomplish this, the Urban Strategies Council will seek ways to encourage and facilitate the coordination and expansion of existing resources through the use of data to guide policy and the identification of approaches, models, and activities that have proven successful in poverty reduction. In addition, the Urban Strategies Council will rely on public education, convening, and advocacy capabilities to encourage and assist in the development of strategies aimed at providing a chance for every child.

The Council's board is still in formation but the current members are:

Angela Glover Blackwell, President
Most Reverend John S. Cummins, Bishop of the Diocese of Oakland
Jane Garcia, Executive Director, La Clinica de la Raza
The Reverend Will L. Herzfeld, D.D., Pastor, Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Robert C. Maynard, Editor and President, *The Tribune*
Robert W. Nichelini, Deputy Chief of Police of Oakland
Robert A.D. Schwartz, Attorney at Law
Robert S. Shoffner, Vice-President, First Interstate Bank
Norma J. Tucker, President, Merritt College
James A. Vohs, Chairman and President of Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc.

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Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Urban Strategies Council, I wish to express appreciation and thanks to the many people who, in the midst of their busy schedules, took time to find and interpret information and data for us and share their personal insights regarding the poverty risks which threaten Oakland's children and youth.

In particular, we thank Denise Peebles and Karen Hembry of the East Bay Perinatal Council, Dr. Barbara Allen and Janis Burger of the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, Dr. Grace Carol Massey of the Institute for Developmental Studies, Dorothy Patterson of the Teen Parent Assistance Program and Dr. Joseph Adwere-Boamah of the Office of Research Oakland Unified School District, Kati Haycock of the Achievement Council, Helen Cagampang of the PACE Program at U.C. Berkeley, Floretta Chisolm of Oakland Head Start, Angela Johnson, the Oakland Childcare Coordinator, Kathy Archuleta and Miles Frazell of the Alameda County Social Services Agency, Gay Plair Cobb of the Oakland Private Industry Council, Dr. Ann Bouie-Wilson of Project Interface, Dr. James Jackson of Highland Hospital, Dora Monterrosa of La Clinica de la Raza, Christian Day, Ilona Einowski and especially Ann Gerken of the State Data Program at U.C. Berkeley, Marc Teicholz, Research Assistant, and Johnny Lorigo of McClymonds High School.

Special thanks to Aileen Hernandez Associates and Aileen Hernandez, in particular, for her guidance and ideas regarding this report; and to Paulicos P. Prastacos and Pertti Karjalainen of the Association of Bay Area Governments.

Very special appreciation for their honesty and openness to James Edwards, Katrina Washington, Henry Mitchell, Julia Calhoun, Allison Mays-Reed, Donna Rhinehart, Debrah Moutry, Judy Klein, and Bill Mayfield.

My deepest thanks to David Troutt, a recent graduate of Stanford University who, during this past year as a research analyst, contributed greatly to the production of this document through research, data gathering, interviews, and writing. I especially appreciated the sensitivity and skill he exhibited in drafting the vignettes, and his persistence in developing the concept of the maps at the end of this document. Special thanks to staff members Gloria Kennard and Edward F. Church and consultant Maria Casey.

In addition, I wish to acknowledge the intellectual support I received from James Gibson of the Rockefeller Foundation and Michael Fix of the Urban Institute.

We are very grateful for the generous support from the following foundations that made this report possible: The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, and The San Francisco Foundation.

In gratitude and appreciation,

Angela Glover Blackwell
President and Executive Director
of the Urban Strategies Council

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Executive Summary

What is the Urban Strategies Council?

The Urban Strategies Council is an Oakland-based non-profit resource/policy group seeking to work with the Oakland community by providing data, convening, and advocacy support, to develop comprehensive, focused initiatives aimed at reducing urban persistent poverty.

Is poverty a serious problem in Oakland?

Serious, yes, but not catastrophic. In 1966, 13 percent of Oakland's population lived below the poverty level. In 1980, 18 percent did. Of 20 large U.S. cities selected from a listing of the 50 largest cities in the 1980 Census in which Newark had the highest poverty rate at 33 percent and San Jose had the lowest at 8 percent, Oakland ranked fourteenth between Washington, D.C. at 19 percent and Los Angeles at 16 percent. When compared with six geographically diverse central cities, Oakland exhibits one of the lower rates of overall poverty and the highest level of schooling among Black men and women over age 25.

Therefore, while poverty is a serious problem in Oakland, it is not as severe as it is in many other cities. With enough resources put into targeted, focused, proven strategies, we can significantly reduce poverty here.

How many children in Oakland are poor?

Thirty-seven percent of Oakland's children are poor – more than 30,000. Of those, more than 10,000 are infants and toddlers under five years old. Three out of four poor children are Black. In the poor neighborhoods in Oakland, 56 percent of children live below the poverty level.

Where do these poor children live?

The majority of poor children in Oakland live in female-headed families. Seventy-five percent of families with children in poverty are headed by single women. Increasingly, these poor families are living in neighborhoods that are predominantly poor. From 1970 to 1980, there was a 79 percent increase in the sheer numbers of poor families with children living in neighborhoods in which at least 40 percent of the families there lived below the poverty level.

Are all families headed by females at risk for persistent poverty?

No, in fact, while poverty is becoming more concentrated in families headed by single women, the proportion of female-headed families that are poor is shrinking. In 1970 half of all female-headed families were poor, but in 1980 one-third of such families were poor. The greatest risks confront those women who lack education and skills. Those females who were not achieving in school and dropped out, often beginning families as teenagers, are the most likely to be caught in the cycle of poverty.

Can poor women heading families work their way out of poverty?

Yes, but only with basic skills and appropriate job training. A new urban landscape has

emerged in Oakland's job market over the last 20 years, which threatens the incomes of entry-level wage earners raising families. Black males and females suffer much higher rates of unemployment and non-participation than other groups. Entry-level jobs are now concentrated among service and "pink-collar" (clerical and sales) industries where wages are low, benefits are few, and skill requirements are often high.

What are the job opportunities for men?

The disproportionately low earnings capacity for women has been coupled with the decline in the number of men working full-time. In 1980 in Oakland, for every 100 Black females between the ages of 25 and 34, there were only 45 Black men of the same age working full time.

Where does the poverty cycle begin?

It begins in poor families. And poor families are likely to produce infants at risk. In Alameda County's high-risk areas, including most of Oakland, between 1978 and 1984 the infant mortality rate averaged 13.9 deaths per thousand. This rate was 59.8 percent greater than the remaining parts of the county. Black infants fared worse. In the same period, 1978 to 1984, the average Black infant mortality rate was 79.3 percent higher than the rest of the county.

Low birthweight is the prime contributor to infant deaths. In 1985, 13 percent of Black babies were born of low birthweight compared to 7 percent for the rest of the county. In the poverty areas of Alameda County, the low birthweight rates are over 10 percent. Births to teens are a contributor to the high low birthweight rate in the county. In 1985 in Alameda County, 3.2 percent of all births were to teens under 17. But 5 percent of all low weight births were to this group.

What can be done to improve birthweights?

There is no mystery concerning what is needed to improve birth outcomes. For years the medical literature has confirmed the success of early comprehensive prenatal care in increasing birthweight and reducing infant mortality. Yet, in Alameda County, 20 percent of women did not begin prenatal care during the first trimester.

What about preschool education as a way out of poverty?

Several longitudinal studies have shown that providing quality preschool education to low-income minority children not only improves their performance in school, but improves their life options as well. Yet, among nearly 11,500 two- to five-year-olds receiving AFDC in Oakland, fewer than 4,000 are involved in child-care or preschool programs that could provide this quality preschool experience.

Are poor children succeeding academically in the Oakland public schools?

Many are; but too many are not. Those attending schools that are predominated by low-income children appear at greatest risk. Among the elementary schools in Oakland there are 21 schools in which over 50 percent of the students receive AFDC. While some of these schools appear to be outstanding, many appear to be in need of assistance. The same is true for the middle and junior high schools with high concentrations of poor children.

What are the prospects for Oakland's youth?

The threat of persistent poverty is stark for at-risk youth. Students concentrated in schools that are overwhelmingly poor are more likely to underachieve academically and are not attending four-year institutions in the numbers that one would hope. At two high schools over 90 percent of the students are Black and over 95 percent of the students receive AFDC. During adolescence, the risk of persistent poverty is intensified by high dropout rates, teenage pregnancies, and teen idleness. According to the 1980 Census, of all youth aged 16 to 19 in Oakland who are out of school, 51 percent of the high school graduates and 69 percent of the non-high

school graduates were unemployed or not in the labor force.

What can Oakland do to reduce the threat of persistent poverty?

Oakland should build on its strengths to develop comprehensive, community-wide focused initiatives to reduce the threat of persistent poverty. There are examples all around Oakland of service providers addressing the issues of infant mortality, low birthweight, teenage pregnancy, youth idleness, appropriate job training and quality educational experiences. We need to identify those programs and efforts that are working and expand the availability of these important resources to all of Oakland's families, children, and youth in need.

We need to provide support and community-wide cooperation and coordination for efforts that seek to:

- Improve family incomes, by focusing on increasing the earnings of females heading families and increasing the job opportunities and the earnings of at-risk males.
- Improve child health by reducing the threat of low birthweight.
- Greatly expand the availability of quality preschool education for poor minority children and build excellence in our public schools, focusing especially on those schools with high concentrations of poor children.
- Provide greater options for youth through efforts to connect the youth to health, social service and counseling support, after-school programs, academic support, appropriate job training programs, college readiness efforts, mentorships, and work opportunities.

What can the Urban Strategies Council do to assist?

The Urban Strategies Council is available as a resource to the entire Oakland community to provide data about those in and at risk for poverty, and information about approaches and models that are successfully reducing these risks. The Council will also provide convening and advocacy assistance to help develop and implement these strategies to create a chance for every child.

Introduction

The existence of a sizable population of minorities trapped in what threatens to be persistent poverty is not a phenomenon peculiar to Oakland. In fact, cities across the country are experiencing the entrenchment of the poor in increasingly isolated and depressed neighborhoods. This report explores the risks that threaten to trap Oakland's children in a cycle of persistent poverty. It challenges Oakland to build upon its many strengths and become a model for coordinating, targeting, and expanding existing resources to significantly relieve the threat of long-term poverty.

In the face of persistent poverty, Oakland offers real opportunities for building a healthier and more productive community. It is a city with a diversified economic base, a multicultural population, and committed, accessible civic leadership. At various times all sectors of this community – private, public, volunteer, community-based organizations, churches – have demonstrated a willingness to work together to address common community concerns. If persistent poverty can be effectively addressed any place, it can be addressed in Oakland. What is needed is a sustained focus on the roots of persistent poverty and workable, coordinated initiatives to build pathways out.

According to the 1980 Census there are 10,559 families with children under 18 years in Oakland living below the poverty level. Increasingly, these families are concentrated in neighborhoods that are isolated from services, employment opportunities, community institutions, and diverse role models. If these poverty trends continue, the children of these families will continue lives of poverty.

From the beginning, children growing up in poverty are overexposed to risk factors that lead to continued deprivation. Their mothers often do not receive the prenatal care, nutrition, and support necessary for a healthy birth. Prohibitive cost and long waiting lists for subsidized childcare spaces severely limit access to acceptable childcare arrangements. Access to quality preschool education that could provide the head start needed for successful school performance is lacking. These children often do not have quality elementary, junior high, and high school experiences. Nor do they have the opportunities to discover their talents through structured after-school programs in music, crafts, drama, art, creative writing or athletics.

All too often because of the absence of job opportunities available to parents and other community adults, these children are not exposed to adults who know the satisfaction of working and being rewarded for that work. And, as older youth, they often do not have chances to work themselves and build the self-esteem that comes from a a job – and a paycheck.

The result of this combined deprivation is that many poor children growing up in Oakland's poor neighborhoods will live out their childhoods in poverty and begin a repetition of this insidious cycle unless we collectively begin to act to provide real options.

This is not only a problem for the poor.

America's continued prosperity and competitive status in the world depends on its ability to educate and provide avenues to productivity for poor minority children. Current estimates are that by the year 2020 one-third of the U.S. population will be minority. If current high levels of poverty among minorities continue, a sizable number of those comprising the future work force will be ill-equipped for the task. To continue to thrive, then, this country must do something about the opportunities available to the poor.

Oakland's problems are only a microcosm of this larger American dilemma. Just as children are the nation's greatest future resource, they are also Oakland's greatest resource. While we may not be able to fully control how our investment in that resource is handled on the federal level, in Oakland we can and should control it. Oakland now has the service providers, the business and community leadership, and the increasing stability and prosperity to direct this investment wisely.

Fortunately for Oakland, this city's poverty is not as severe as that in many American cities and the prospects for real opportunities are great. According to 1980 Census data the percent of poverty in Oakland is less than that of Atlanta, Baltimore, and Cleveland, all comparably sized cities. Oakland also has not been hit as hard, as many eastern and midwestern cities have, by the shift from manufacturing to service jobs. Oakland's middle class has continued to flourish and it has a sizable Black middle class.

Yet, when fully one-third of Oakland's children live in poverty, one can find little comfort in the knowledge that "things could be worse." But since poverty in Oakland is still manageable, there is reason to hope that with resources, cooperation, and hard work we can confront the threat of continued poverty here.

This document examines the risk factors and the interrelationship of those factors that may lead to lives of persistent poverty; in particular, being a member of a poor family and having a dangerously low weight at birth, not having access to quality education and training, and spending the formative teenage years idle. If these four areas – family income, child health, education and training, and youth opportunity – can be substantially improved, many more of Oakland's children will have a chance for a brighter future.

Currently, there are impressive activities in Oakland addressing various parts of this problem. But continued poverty here indicates that more needs to be done. We must expand on the efforts that have proven successful and develop new models in areas where needed. It is our hope that this report will serve as a catalyst for dialogues which will lead to the initiatives that will build bridges to self-sufficiency.

This document is divided into four chapters. They are briefly summarized below.

Chapter 1, **Poverty in Oakland**, looks at Oakland as a city in transition and examines in some detail the growing numbers of poor, especially children.

Chapter 2, **Families**, examines poor families – perhaps the single biggest risk factor for a life of persistent poverty. Yet, we know that all people born into poverty do not stay there. This chapter looks at female-headed families in poverty and the shrinking opportunities available to men and women during the childbearing years. Included is an examination of the increasing concentration of the poor in poor neighborhoods.

Chapter 3, **Infancy and Childhood**, examines infant mortality and low birthweight trends in Oakland emphasizing that a low birthweight baby born into a poor family is at extreme risk. Lack of access to preschool programs in Oakland's poor neighborhoods is then discussed, followed by a look at poor minority children in Oakland's schools.

Finally, Chapter 4, **Adolescence**, explores the ominous signs of persistent poverty that are apparent among the youth. Severe school underachievement, high dropout rates, low attendance at four-year institutions, youth idleness, and

teenage pregnancy are all discussed as factors that lead to persistent poverty.

Throughout this report when the term "poverty" is used, unless defined otherwise, it refers to persons living below the official poverty level as used by the U.S. Census. This definition is based on a calculation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The level at which "poverty" occurs is three times the amount of income, before taxes, needed to buy enough thrifty foodstuff to feed a family (adjusted according to the size of the family). At the time of the 1980 Census, the amount for a family of four was $8,414. In 1985, it was $10,650. Families are considered "below" the poverty level if their income is less than this amount. "Poverty level" does not take into account non-cash assistance, such as Medicaid, food stamps, or subsidized housing. This is an imprecise measure at best, but since it is used by many agencies, writers, and institutions, it is useful for purposes of comparison.

About the Thematic Maps

In the final appendix to this document, the reader will find four removable thematic maps enclosed in a folder on the back cover. Directly opposite is a base map showing Oakland's seven community development districts. The grey areas represent areas in which at least 30 percent of families with children living there had incomes below poverty level in 1980. The four overlay maps may be manipulated in various ways to show the geographical concentration of AFDC recipiency, births to teens, low birthweight births, and teen idleness (an index described in Chapter 4) in relationship to these areas.

We encourage the reader to orient him or herself with the maps when beginning the report, and to use them as hands-on reference points throughout the body of the text.

About the Sources

In the hope of making our document more readable, we have almost entirely omitted footnotes from the text. However, what is gained from readability is sometimes lost in providing valuable resources. Therefore, we have attached a short bibliography to the end of the report listing sources used in each chapter as well as reference materials for the interested reader.

In brief, U.S. Census Bureau data (1980) formed the core of the research strategy. The Oakland Unified School District's published school profiles, raw data from the Alameda County Department of Social Services, the East Bay Perinatal Council's Adolescent Family Life Program records, the Children's Defense Fund, and calculations by the Association of Bay Area Governments all proved indispensable. We also relied heavily on published reports, articles, studies, and periodical pieces from an array of research institutes and scholars across the country, most of whose works are listed in the bibliography.

What follows is an attempt to identify the points in the cycles of poverty that are vulnerable to interventions which can stop these cycles and create a chance for every child.

Chapter 1: Poverty in Oakland

In the midst of prosperity and growth, poverty in Oakland remains a serious problem.

For many people, California and prosperity are inseparable. Today, California is the largest state, with more than 10 percent of the nation's people and 12 percent of total personal income.

The nine-county San Francisco Bay Area is the most affluent region of this affluent state. This expansive metropolis with its population of 5.6 million is the nation's fourth largest metropolitan area. With only 5 percent of California's land area, but one-fifth of its population, the Bay Area has become one of the most prosperous metropolitan regions in the United States. Per capita personal income in the Bay Area sails 10 percent above the state average and nearly 30 percent above the national average.

Although San Francisco is the Bay Area's oldest and most densely populated urban center, most of the region's population now lives elsewhere around the Bay. Well over half of the population of the Bay Area resides in three counties: Santa Clara County, which has over 1.4 million residents, and Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, the "East Bay," which have almost two million residents.

The East Bay is the Bay region's biggest growth center. Its population is expanding over 10 percent every decade. A large proportion of East Bay residents are professionals with substantial disposable incomes. In the 1980 Census 132,000 East Bay households reported incomes of $35,000 or more, significantly more than any other Bay Area county. Because of this affluence, the East Bay has become the largest metropolitan market in northern California.

At the center of this prosperous region is Oakland.

A. City in Transition

Oakland is a beautiful and prosperous city. It is nestled between a long waterfront and rolling foothills directly across the bay from San Francisco. Over 330,000 people live in Oakland, housed in an architectural mixture of stately Victorians, rustic California bungalows, small Mediterranean style homes, postwar tract housing, and contemporary stucco apartments.

With its pleasant weather, waterfront marina, midtown lake, and sports coliseum, Oakland typifies America's classic images of California living.

Oakland is also an employment center. With a wholesale distribution and transport industry (based on one of the largest container ports in the world), several corporate headquarters, a regional concentration of government

agencies, and many small retail and service employers, Oakland's economy has created more jobs (an estimated 186,300) than its resident labor force (181,248).

Oakland is both a beautiful California community and a prospering Pacific metropolis.

But many Oakland citizens are poor. Although Oakland's population is only 30 percent of the East Bay total, 60 percent of the high-poverty East Bay census tracts are in Oakland. To understand poverty in Oakland it is important to look at the changes which have taken place in the city over the past two generations.

Oakland was a different city in the 1950s. It was a manufacturing and shipping center populated by a relatively stable citizenry. Half of the city's households owned their own homes. When *Look* magazine cited Oakland as its "All-American City" for 1957, non-whites were less than 20 percent of the city's population, and all of Oakland's business leaders and elected officials were white males.

But like other American central cities, Oakland began to change. Postwar development of new freeways and new suburbs started a process of "decentralization." Factories, homeowners, and retail businesses began to leave Oakland, while lower-income people, especially racial and ethnic minorities, moved into the city to replace those who were leaving. By the 1960s, over 100,000 middle-income homeowners had left Oakland, to be replaced by lower-income renters. This process of demographic change continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

Oakland in the 1980s is a multicultural community. With a population 47 percent Black, 10 percent Hispanic, and 8 percent Asian and Pacific Islander, as well as 35 percent white, Oakland is the largest city in California where people of color are a majority of the population.

More than most California cities, Oakland's civic leadership reflects this diversity. The past 20 years have seen an ascendance of minority and women leaders into electoral offices and leadership positions in private institutions. This has so affected a wide spectrum of urban policies that in a 1983 nationwide comparison of major American cities, Oakland ranked as the most integrated.

B. Persisting Poverty

The diverse civic representation, however, has not solved Oakland's problems of social economy. A persistent poverty afflicts Oakland. But as the data on the following pages shows, Oakland's poverty is not nearly as severe as that in many American cities.

Table 1-1 demonstrates that Oakland's rates of poverty in 1980 and 1970 were comparable to those in other western cities both in terms of overall poverty and Black poverty. This was true concerning changes in poverty rates as well. Among 10 of the 20 cities represented, poverty rates rose by four or more percentage points, the greatest increase occurring in Newark, New Jersey (10.5). From 1970 to 1980, poverty in Oakland rose by only two percentage points.

Tables 1-2 through 1-5 compare Oakland with six geographically diverse central cities. These comparisons reveal that Oakland's overall and Black poverty rates are toward the low end of the scale for all age groups. Also, levels of schooling for Black men and women in Oakland are among the highest. So, as we examine poverty in Oakland, it is appropriate to remember that neither the poverty nor the conditions in Oakland are catastrophic.

Table 1-1: Poverty Rates for 20 of America's Largest Cities[1] Based on 1980 and 1970 Census Data

	Total Population		Black Population	
Cities	Poverty Rate 1980	Change From 1970	Poverty Rate 1980	Change From 1970
Newark, NJ[2]	33%	10.5	38%	10.8
Atlanta, GA	28%	7.0	35%	5.3
New Orleans, LA	26%	-0.6	37%	-6.7
Miami, FL	25%	4.2	39%	7.1
Baltimore, MD	23%	4.5	31%	3.9
Cleveland, OH	22%	4.7	32%	4.4
Detroit, MI	22%	7.0	27%	4.7
Philadelphia, PA	21%	5.2	32%	6.8
San Antonio, TX	21%	-0.8	29%	-6.7
Boston, MA	20%	4.0	29%	0.5
Chicago, IL	20%	5.8	32%	6.6
New York, NY	20%	5.2	30%	5.5
Washington, DC	19%	1.7	22%	2.7
Oakland, CA	**18%**	**2.0**	**25%**	**0.1**
Los Angeles, CA	16%	3.1	26%	0.7
Denver, CO	14%	0.0	23%	-1.4
San Francisco, CA	14%	-0.4	25%	0.
Dallas, TX	14%	0.6	24%	-5.8
Seattle, WA	11%	0.8	23%	0.5
San Jose, CA[3]	8%	-0.6	15%	-5.4

[1]Representative cities, taken from the 50 largest U.S. cities.
[2]The city with the most poverty in the 50 largest cities.
[3]The city with the least poverty in the 50 largest cities.

Table 1-2: Oakland and Six Central Cities Compared, 1980

	Atlanta	Baltimore	Boston	Cleveland	Dallas	District of Columbia	Oakland
Geographic Area	South	Mid-Atlantic	Northeast	Midwest	Southwest	Mid-Atlantic	West Coast
Population	425,072	786,775	562,994	573,822	904,078	638,333	339,337
Percent Black	67%	55%	22%	44%	29%	70%	47%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1982).

Table 1-3: Percentage of Persons Below Poverty Level by Age, Oakland and Six Central Cities Compared, 1980

Age of group	Atlanta	Baltimore	Boston	Cleveland	Dallas	District of Columbia	Oakland
Children under 16	40%	34%	32%	32%	21%	28%	30%
Persons 16-64	23%	20%	18%	19%	11%	16%	17%
Persons 65+	26%	19%	13%	20%	17%	19%	11%

Note: Excludes inmates of institutions, persons in military group quarters and in college dormitories and unrelated individuals under 15 years. Data are estimates based on samples.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1981a), Table 245.

Table 1-4: Percentage of Black Persons Below Poverty Level by Age, Oakland and Six Central Cities Compared, 1980

	Atlanta	Baltimore	Boston	Cleveland	Dallas	District of Columbia	Oakland
Children under 16	45%	41%	40%	43%	31%	31%	36%
Persons 16-64	29%	26%	24%	24%	20%	18%	22%
Persons 65+	39%	32%	20%	32%	39%	25%	15%

Note: Excludes inmates of institutions, persons in military group quarters and in college dormitories, and unrelated individuals under 15 years. Data are estimates based on samples.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1981a), Table 245.

Table 1-5: Years of School Completed by Black Men and Women Aged 25 and Over, Oakland and Six Central Cities Compared, 1980

	Atlanta	Baltimore	Boston	Cleveland	Dallas	District of Columbia	Oakland
Black males 25 & over:							
Completed 8th grade or less	28%	33%	18%	24%	20%	23%	18%
Completed 4 years of high school	50%	42%	63%	48%	59%	64%	67%
Completed 4+ years of college	10%	6%	10%	4%	9%	13%	11%
Black females 25 & over:							
Completed 8th grade or less	26%	26%	17%	20%	18%	19%	16%
Completed 4 years of high school	51%	47%	60%	51%	60%	65%	66%
Completed 4+ years of college	10%	7%	8%	4%	9%	12%	9%

Note: Data are estimates based on samples.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, (1981c) Table 132.

Table 1-6: Poverty in Oakland

	1966	1970	1980	1986 (est)
Total population	373,460	361,561	339,337	352,100
Below poverty	46,720	58,534	61,609	80,092
Poverty rate	13%	16%	18%	23%

Source: 1966 figures, City Household survey; 1970 and 1980, U.S. Census; 1986, based on ABAG estimates and national poverty trends

1. Increasing Poverty

Over the past 20 years, poverty has become more pervasive in Oakland. In 1966, a special survey of households found that 46,720 Oakland residents lived in poverty, about one-eighth of the city's total population.

A generation later, the poverty rate has almost doubled. In 1980, the census counted 61,609 persons below the poverty level, almost one-fifth of Oakland's total population. Today estimates are that approximately 80,000 people are living in poverty, nearly a fourth of Oakland's population.

Data on poverty in Oakland over the past 20 years are shown in Table 1-6. (The current level of poverty in Oakland can only be approximated. The City's Department of Social Services estimates that there are 90,000 people in Oakland at or near poverty. In deriving the figure of 80,000, we have assumed that Oakland has reflected the national economic trends that produced a 30 percent increase in poverty nationwide in the five years between 1979 and 1984.)

2. Children in Poverty

Even more unsettling than overall poverty is the prevalence of poverty among children. Children make up nearly 40 percent of the country's poor. A report by the Congressional Research Service found that the poverty rate for children increased by 35 percent between 1979 and 1983, and by even greater margins if alternative definitions of poverty are used. The risk is much higher for children of color, who are two to three times more likely to be poor than white children.

The patterns of poverty among Oakland's children are no different. In Oakland, out of every 100 children, 37 live in poverty. Over 30,000 children in Oakland are growing up poor, including almost 10,000 babies under five years old. The poverty rate among children who live in Oakland's low-income neighborhoods is even more striking. There out of every 100 children, 56 live in poverty. These trends are illustrated in Table 1-7.

By racial and ethnic group, the disparities in child poverty in Oakland are alarming. For white children, the poverty rate is 2.7 percent; for Black children, 35.7 percent; for Native Americans, 35 percent; for Hispanics, 28.8 percent; and for Asians and Pacific Islanders, 21.8 percent.

The remainder of this document examines the risk factors that threaten to entrap these poor children in a cycle of persistent poverty.

Table 1-7: Oakland Children in Poverty

	Citywide		Poverty Areas	
	1980	1986 (est.)	1980	1986 (est.)
Persons under 18	80,476	83,503	37,020	38,412
Below poverty	22,852	30,825	15,800	21,330
Poverty rate	28%	37%	43%	56%

Source: 1980 figures, U.S. Census; 1986, based on ABAG estimates and national poverty trends

Chapter 2: Families

Persistent poverty begins in families – often headed by single women.

More and more families are living below the poverty line in Oakland, though general population has remained fairly stable over the last decade. One out of five families with children was poor in 1970, compared to one in four by 1980. The sheer numbers of poor families increased by 30 percent during that decade. There were two thousand additional Black families living below the poverty line in 1980.

This chapter examines the families of Oakland's at-risk children by focusing on the opportunities available to their parents. Emphasis is placed on the increase in poor female-headed families and the neighborhoods of dense poverty where they live. Additionally, the growing labor force disadvantages facing young parents of at-risk children and the rising rate of welfare recipiency are chronicled. The evolution of a new urban landscape – where families are isolated from opportunities and where many of Oakland's children grow up at great risk – is apparent.

In Oakland:

- Almost three out of four homes where poor children live are headed by single women, and three out of four poor children are Black.
- Four out of five Black families living below the poverty line were headed by women.
- The concentration of poor families into very poor neighborhoods has dramatically increased, along with their isolation from the city's mainstream.
- A new urban landscape emerging in cities like Oakland during the last 20 years has changed the job opportunities available to adults with few skills and little education. Today's parents grapple with jobs that pay less, require higher skills, and are often unattainable.
- Labor force disadvantages have kept the numbers of economically marriageable Black males low and continue to hit female-headed families hardest.
- Welfare recipiency, which increased by 25 percent between 1970 and 1980, is still on the rise in Oakland's entrenched poverty areas.

A. Female-Headed Families

No poverty trend is more significant than the increase in the proportion of female-headed

families that are poor since 1970; this increase poses the greatest risk to Oakland's children. When the females heading these families lack education and skills, there are few opportunities to improve the families' incomes. The low earnings force these females heading families into the poorest neighborhoods, further isolating the women and their children from resources and opportunities.

The number of female-headed families living below the poverty line in Oakland increased by 43 percent between 1970 and 1980. In 1970, female-headed families in Oakland represented two-thirds of all the city's families in poverty (65.6 percent), as shown in Table 2-1. By 1980, they represented nearly three-quarters of all poor families (72.1 percent).

For children living below the poverty line the increase was identical. In 1970, two-thirds (65.7 percent) of Oakland's poor children under 18 lived in female-headed families. In 1980, 70.2 percent of all poor children lived in such families.

Table 2-1: Female-Headed Families and their Children in Poverty in Oakland, 1970 and 1980

	1970	1980	Change
Total poor families	8,105	10,559	+30.3%
Female-headed poor families (% of total)	5,316 (65.6%)	7,615 (72.1%)	+43.2%
Total children living in poverty	22,411	22,413	0%
Poor children in female-headed families (% of total)	14,729 (65.7%)	15,735 (70.2%)	+6.8%

Source: 1970 U.S. Census, Tables 208 & 212; 1980 U.S. Census, Table 250

Poverty has become concentrated among female-headed families, but the actual risk of poverty in these families has declined. For example, half of all female-headed families in Oakland were poor in 1970, but in 1980, one-third of such families were poor. Clearly, some single women with children are at much greater risk for poverty than others.

The risk of poverty among female-headed families has been greatest in Oakland's Black community. Seventy-two percent or 16,412 of Oakland's 22,809 female-headed families were Black in 1980. The number of Black female-headed families that were poor increased by 65 percent between 1970 and 1980, from 3,860 to 6,355 (Table 2-2). In 1970, they accounted for 35 percent of all Black families and 73.4 percent of Black families in poverty. But in 1980, 42 percent of all Black families were headed by women, and they represented 80.3 percent of Black families in poverty.

While nearly the same proportion of Black children were poor in 1970 as in 1980, there has been a growing concentration of poor children in single-parent homes. Between 1970 and 1980 the number of Black children who were poor and living in single-parent households increased by 16 percent. In fact, by 1980 approximately 50 percent of all Black children from single-parent homes lived in poverty.

Poverty among female-headed families is also devastating in Oakland's Native American community. Nearly a quarter (23.6 percent) of Native American families were below the poverty line in 1980. Of those, 58 percent were headed by single women. More than a third of Native American children under 16 were poor.

B. Geographical Concentration

Increased family poverty has been accompanied by a growing concentration of low-income families into high poverty areas. Many poor people in Oakland live in "pockets of poverty," neighborhoods populated almost exclusively by

Table 2-2: Black Female-Headed Families as Percentage of all Black Families and those in Poverty in Oakland, 1970 and 1980

	1970	1980	Change
Total Black female-headed families	6,731	16,412	+143%
= % of all Black females	35%	42%	
Total Black female-headed poor families	3,860	6,355	+64%
= % of all poor Black families	73.4%	80.3%	

Source: 1970 U.S. Census, Tables 208 & 212; 1980 U.S. Census, Table 250

poor and near-poor families and individuals.

Between 1970 and 1980, the number of poverty areas in Oakland increased, and the number of poor families living in the areas of most extreme poverty significantly increased. It should be noted, however, that at the same time, many poor families moved out of poverty areas.

Information derived from the 1970 and 1980 Censuses reveals changing trends in the concentration of poor families in Oakland's neighborhoods. There has been a greater influx of poor families into areas where the density of poverty is the highest. Table 2-3 shows that fewer low-income families lived in areas of 20 to 29 percent poverty in 1980 than ten years earlier. However, 40 percent more poor families lived in more densely poor areas, the 30 to 39 percent tracts. The greatest increase came in the areas of most extreme concentration, tracts with at least 40 percent of families in poverty. Nearly 80 percent more low-income families lived in such areas in 1980 than in 1970. Poor families in these areas represented almost a third of all poor families in Oakland.

The table also indicates a more promising trend: the number of poor families living outside of poverty areas increased between 1970 and 1980 by 13.2 percent.

An additional graphic illustration of the overall increase in the concentration of poor families into very poor neighborhoods is shown in a comparison between the maps found on the next two pages. The shaded areas represent clusters of census tracts in which 30 percent or more of all families with children were poor. As the maps show, the number of census tracts designated as high poverty areas in 1970 had increased by almost 10 percent in 1980. During that time, the number of poor families living in those areas increased by 58.5 percent. Overall, half of all Oakland's poor families with children lived in these areas. (These maps may also be compared to the ones in the last appendix of the book.)

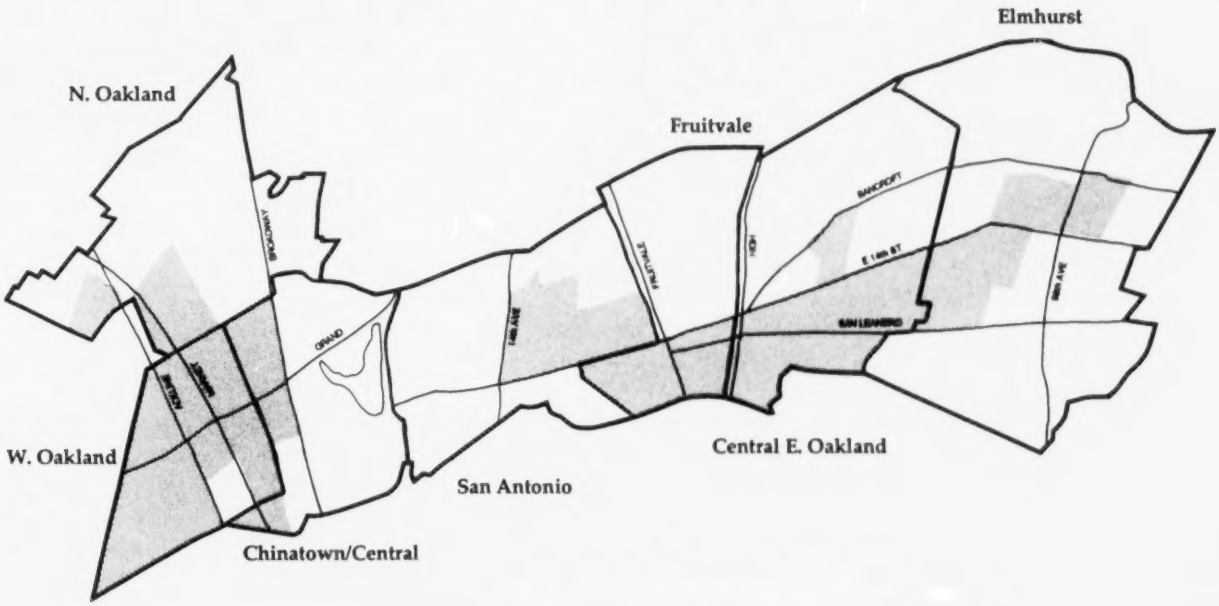
The impact of concentration on persistent urban poverty was first discussed by the noted sociologist William Julius Wilson in his examination of the changing landscape of inner cities. The consequence of concentration is isolation, according to Wilson. Low-income families

Table 2-3: Families with Children in Poverty: Geographical Growth & Density, 1970 and 1980

	1970	1980	Change
Total families w/children with below-poverty incomes	8,105	10,559	+30%
living in areas with:			
0-19% poverty	1,977	2,238	+13.2%
20-29% poverty	2,279	2,217	-2.7%
30-39% poverty	2,105	2,979	+40%
40% and greater poverty	1,744	3,125	+79%

Source: 1980 U.S. Census; Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Cedar data base

Family Poverty, 1970 (≥30% of all families with children under 18 living below poverty)



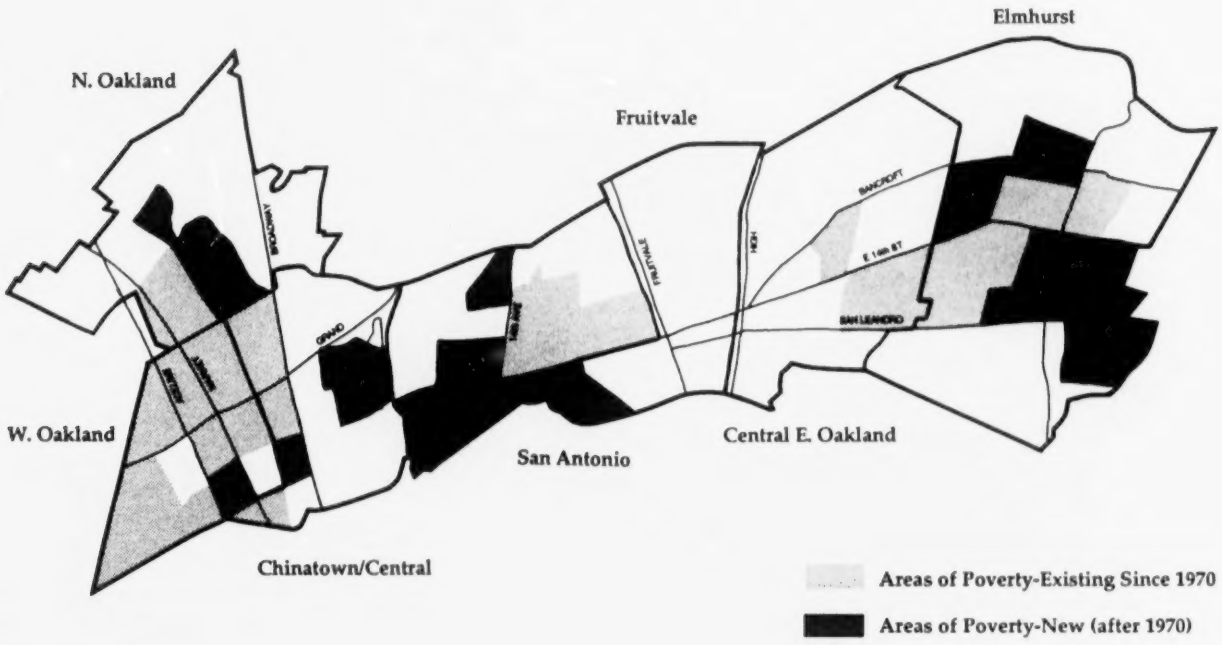
concentrated in low-income pockets are cut off from the mainstream of society. These families suffer from a crucial lack of information and resources as well as a lack of diverse role models and services. Families isolated in this fashion are at increased risk for persistent poverty.

Today, many more families in Oakland – the poor and near or working poor – are threatened by growing constraints as the city's landscape changes.

Many neighborhoods are now devoid of the diversity of professionals, the array of quality health and public maintenance services, as well as the schools and stores they once had. While other sectors of the city have enjoyed rapid capital growth and development, the sectors where poor families live have seen unabated drug use, increased violence, deteriorated housing, and a retrenchment in services for critical care and education.

The concentration of poor and near-poor families in these areas, and hence their isolation, reflects both the increase in low-income families and the housing constraints that inhibit their mobility. In 1970, of all families with children, one in four lived in a high poverty area. By 1980,

Family Poverty, 1980 (≥30% of all families with children under 18 living below poverty)



one family in three lived in these areas. The proportion of families with children living in areas of extreme poverty jumped from 9 percent to 15.4 percent during the same period.

Isolation lies at the heart of persistent poverty. For families in Oakland, the risk is rapidly growing.

C. Labor Force Disadvantages

Labor force disadvantages now faced by a generation of Oakland workers are reflected by the following trends:

- high rates of unemployment and non-participation;
- a shift from well-paying to low-paying jobs;
- generally decreased earnings capacity for workers with inadequate skills and no college degree;
- wide disparities between the earnings capacity of men and women; and
- a comparatively smaller pool of fully

employed Black men than men from other ethnic groups.

In examining the potential risk for persistent poverty, we concentrate in this section on the labor force status of adults between 20 and 34 years old – hereafter referred to as "prime-aged" – because they represent the young parents of the current generation of children. For many prime-aged workers, the current labor force picture presents great uncertainty about their ability to support a family.

1. Non-Participation and Unemployment

The unemployment rate for all of Oakland averaged about 9 percent in 1986, but it varied widely by race, age, and gender – particularly for prime-aged people of color. Table 2-4 shows these trends based on the 1980 Census.

Black males aged 20 to 34 were unemployed at rates three times higher than white males of the same age, who have the lowest rates of unemployment. Prime-aged Native American males had twice the level of unemployment as white males. While unemployment among 20- to 34-year-old Hispanic males was much higher than it was for whites, it was still about half the rate for same-age Black males. Unemployment among Asian and Pacific Islander males was much closer to the levels among whites. Prime-aged women experience similiar unemployment trends across ethnic groups

It is important to note than unemployment rates only count workers temporarily outside the workforce. Not reflected are the persistently poor adults who may remain out of work for extended periods – often months or even years. Table 2-5 on the next page shows the percentages of prime-aged men and women who did not participate in the labor force at all during 1980. Again, the rate of non-participation is highest among Blacks at a time in their lives when they are typically forming families.

For most ethnic groups, young adults typically have a hard time finding steady work, but their job prospects improve dramatically as they reach their late twenties and early thirties. During 1980, non-participation among white and Hispanic men was halved between the 20- to 24-year-old and 25- to 34-year-old age groups. Asian and Pacific Islander males (whose experiences vary among ethnic groups) saw an overall decrease in non-participation of about two-thirds. For Black men, however the decrease in labor force non-participation in their twenties and thirties was modest – a reduction of only six percent, as seen in the table.

Rates of non-participation by women in the labor force are much higher than for men, as the table indicates, and an ethnic pattern similar to that of the male unemployment picture emerges. White and Asian and Pacific Islander prime-aged women experience lower rates of non-participation over time than Black and Hispanic women. Hispanic women have the highest non-participation rates overall. It is important keep in mind, however, that many more Black women in this age group are heading families than women from

Table 2-4: Unemployment Rates for Prime-Aged Adults in Oakland in 1980

	20- to 24-year-old		25- to 34-year-old	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Black	28.7	18.6	17.3	9.8
Hispanic	15.6	17	8.7	8.3
Asian & Pacific Islander	10.4	5	6	4.9
White	9.4	7.5	5.3	5.2

Source: 1980 U.S. Census, STF 4B

Table 2-5: Non-Participation Rates for Prime-Aged Adults in Oakland in 1980

	20- to 24-year-old		25- to 34-year-old	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Black	23.3	39.2	17.4	30
Hispanic	21	48.7	11.6	43.6
Asian & Pacific Islander	32.7	31.8	11.4	25
White	20.8	25.8	9.1	21.6

Source: U.S. Census 1980, STF 4B

other ethnic groups. The high non-participation rates of Black women in Oakland create the greatest risks for children since they head families at twice the rate of Hispanic women and three times that of white and Asian women.

The deficits in education, training, and support experienced by the parents of today's at-risk children may be replicated by the next generation of workers. The changing industrial landscape that has caught many prime-aged workers ill-prepared today may threaten their children tomorrow.

2. Changing Occupational Structure

As a result of recession and the widespread growth of high-tech industries in the Bay Area's suburbs, the manufacturing jobs that once promised good pay and benefits to workers with few skills and little education have rapidly dried up. While many white-collar workers have fared well in Oakland's industrial restructuring, perhaps just as many workers in other sectors have been displaced or left out – particularly Blacks. The dominance of new occupations, particularly in the service and so-called "pink-collar" sectors require more education, pay less, and have made it harder for both displaced and entry-level workers to find employment and achieve incomes sufficient to escape poverty.

Table 2-6 illustrates changes in Oakland's occupational structure for employed Black and Hispanic men and women compared to total workers between 1970 and 1980. (*Note*: The reader is reminded that the most recent, detailed data on employment and occupational trends for Oakland are only as current as the 1980 Census and that in most cases trends are estimated to have continued. Also, data for Asian-Americans and Native Americans were not available for 1970.)

For Oakland as a whole, the trade-off is clear: white-collar employment increased by 7 percent during the last decade while blue-collar work declined by the same percentage. So-called "pink-collar" and service sector employment did not change significantly during that time. However, the picture is different for workers of color.

Black workers increased their proportion in the workforce from 29 percent to 40 percent from 1970 to 1980, and two major trends occurred. On the one hand, the number of Black professionals increased by 150 percent, so that by 1980, one in five employed Black persons held a white-collar job. On the other hand, many blue-collar jobs were lost and appear to be almost directly tied to the increase in sales and clerical or pink-collar work (shaded area, Table 2-6).

About 39 percent of employed Black persons held industrial jobs in 1970, compared to only 26 percent 10 years later. Most of these jobs were held by men. The increase in pink-collar jobs did not make up for this loss, since most of these jobs pay less and have fewer benefits. They are also mostly held by women.

Among the Black employed, one in three held a sales or clerical job in 1980, whereas only a quarter of working Blacks did in 1970. The migration to lower-paying pink-collar work amounted to a doubling in the sheer number of Blacks in the sector and half of all such workers

Table 2-6: Occupational Restructuring

Percentages of Total, Black, & Hispanic Workers in 4 Employment Sectors in Oakland, 1970 and 1980

	Total '70	Total '80	Black '70	Black '80	Hispanic '70	Hispanic '80
White-collar (Professional, technical, management, administrative)	32,224 23.1%	42,169 29.5%	4,440 10.8%	11,166 19.3%	2,018 16.6%	1,822 15.2%
Pink-collar (Sales, clerical)	42,106 30.2%	43,847 30.7%	9,784 23.8%	19,257 33.3%	2,982 23.6%	2,669 22.2%
Blue-collar (Craftspeople, laborers, operatives)	42,761 30.7%	33,674 23.4%	15,902 38.9%	15,277 26.4%	5,238 41.7%	4,817 40.1%
Services	18,432 13.2%	21,539 15.1%	8,418 20.6%	11,438 19.8%	1,608 12.75%	2,476 20.6%

Source: 1970 U.S. Census, Tables 85, 86, 88, 92, 93, 98, 99; 1980 U.S. Census, Table 12, Report 3

in Oakland. According to census data, there was a nine percent increase in the proportion of Black workers who held lower-paying jobs in just 10 years.

This movement of so many workers from blue- into pink-collar jobs during the late seventies has had a profound impact on family income. Young adult workers and more experienced workers displaced by plant closures increasingly had to turn to much lower paying employment in the pink-collar sector. According to the Oakland Private Industry Council's 1986 study of the job market, the average hourly wage paid for entry-level pink-collar employees ranged between $4.90 to $5.93 an hour. The blue-collar average wage range was about $5.47 to $9.50 an hour. The difference is magnified by the lack of health and other benefits provided for most pink-collar workers.

Hispanic workers experienced less change between 1970 and 1980, except for an 8 percent increase in service employment. However, the fact that there was no significant increase in the percentage of white-collar Hispanic workers suggests that the group did not substantially benefit as much from the growth in that sector. (*Note*: The criteria defining a person of Spanish origin changed in the 1980 Census; this change makes it difficult to compare certain elements of 1970 and 1980 Census data).

In summary, the changing structure of available work benefited many professionals but displaced untold numbers of manufacturing workers and younger entry-level workers. Many were forced to work in lower-paying pink-collar and service jobs. The greatest increases came among Blacks, whose employment in low-wage jobs increased by almost 9 percent in as many years. Clearly, the doubling of Black workers employed in white-collar jobs did not compensate for the loss of industrial employment.

There is mounting evidence that the current trend especially impacts Hispanics and recent immigrants from Central America and Southeast

Asia who suffer, like many Blacks, from a lack of skills and education, but who also confront language barriers and problems tied to uncertain immigrant status. Finally, there is no indication that this trend has changed since 1980.

3. Earnings Capacity

A 1980 analysis of mean annual earnings among Oakland's high school graduates working full time compared to dropouts suggests that many prime-aged adults are struggling against uncertainty.

Data from the 1980 Census reveals that the earning power of Black and Hispanic high school graduates does not appear to significantly increase with age. Though dropouts typically made *less* than working graduates, dropouts saw a steadier *increase* in earnings capacity as they gained experience. This is important because workers expect that their earnings will increase with experience and that their high school diplomas will boost their pay scales beyond non-graduates. When younger workers see older workers with high school degrees struggling financially, the incentives that motivate people to stay in school or to continue in low-paying jobs may deteriorate.

It is gratifying to note that a college degree substantially increases earnings capacity. While some college experience was correlated to higher earnings among workers of all ages, ethnicities and genders, those with a degree still made significantly more.

Women still make much less. For women in Oakland, the earnings capacity is even more bleak and the consequences more severe for those heading families. For example, the mean annual earnings for 25- to 34-year-old women with a high school diploma was $11,426 in 1980. For men of the same age and schooling the figure was $14,315, or 20 percent more. The difference is the same for more educated workers. Among 25- to 34-year-old college educated Blacks, for instance, men earned 24.5 percent more than women in 1980. Such huge inequities are common to all ethnic groups and all ages.

These differences in earnings and income have serious consequences for families headed by women. Not only do women workers make less than men in Oakland, but their earnings decline as they get older and more experienced.

This is due in part to the jobs typically held by women. Women are still concentrated in low-paying occupations, such as clerical or service work. In 1980, more than half (52 percent) of working women in Oakland held such jobs.

Another reason is clearly discrimination. According to a 1987 report by the Women's Economic Agenda Project, women are the least unionized workers. Seven out of ten minimum wage workers are women. Increasing the earnings capacity of women to the level of men would have profound effects in lifting families out of poverty.

4. Marriageability

Another indication of labor force disadvantages is the pool of economically marriageable men – defined as the number of males working full time per 100 females of the same age and racial group. Though it is not a perfect measure, the index of marriageability sheds light on how labor force disadvantages affect single-parent families. It assumes that the more males of marriage age are holding down full-time employment, the lower will be the rates of single-parent, female-headed households. Several studies have provided support for this assumption. In Oakland, (as in many large cities), marriageability is lowest and the proportion of female-headed families is highest among Black adults.

Figures from the 1980 Census show rates of economic marriageability for four prime-aged groups. For every one hundred 25- to 34-year-old women of Spanish origin there were 72 same-aged males working in full-time jobs. For whites (including some of Spanish origin) the marriageability rate was 65 males per 100 women;

among Asian and Pacific Islanders the rate was 59. But only 45 Black males in the age group worked full time in 1980. (*Note*: marriageability data for Native Americans were not available for 1980.)

D. Welfare Recipiency

The combination of poor education, unemployment, and constraints on two-parent family formation leads many single mothers and their children into an almost inescapable dependence on public welfare payments.

Table 2-7 shows the labor force status of Black female householders in Oakland for 1980, indicating two significant trends. First, many Black single mothers work, but their unemployment as a group is still higher than for other women. Because of the high proportion of women in minimum wage jobs, many single mothers in Oakland work full time yet still earn less than the poverty level. Second, the proportion of Black single mothers who are not in the labor force at all is almost as great as those who are.

Many – but not all – single mothers outside the labor force in Oakland receive some kind of public assistance. Many single mothers within the labor force also require assistance.

An increase in dependence on public welfare has accompanied Oakland's increase in poverty over the past two decades. Between 1970 and 1980 the number of families receiving public assistance increased by 25.6 percent, from 12,330 to 15,489. This growth in welfare recipiency has continued throughout the 1980s.

Table 2-7: Labor Force Status of Black Female Householders in Oakland in 1980

	Number	Rate/Percent
Employed	8,034	
Unemployed	1,080	11.8 (rate)
Not in labor force	7,283	44.3 (percent)

Source 1980 U.S. Census, STF 4B

Table 2-8: Public Assistance in Oakland, 1980-1986

	1980	1986	Increase
Total cash recipients	49,904	52,785	5.8%
AFDC recipients	44,726	49,872	11.5%

*AFDC includes family group and unemployed programs

Source: Alameda County Social Services Agency data

In 1986, according to Alameda County welfare statistics, 52,785 people in Oakland received cash public assistance. Table 2-8 shows that this represents a 5.8 percent increase. If recipients of Medi-Cal and food stamps are included, the number of welfare recipients in Oakland totals 63,383. The increase among recipients of AFDC alone, about 75 percent of whom are single mothers, was 11.5 percent.

Using 1980 Census data, we can see how public assistance recipiency breaks down for families of different ethnic groups in Oakland. Thirty-two percent of Native American families received some public assistance income in 1980, the largest rate for any ethnic group. Twenty-eight percent of Black families and 18.2 percent of Hispanic families received assistance. Among Asian and Pacific Islanders, 12.6 percent of families received assistance, and 7.5 percent of white families.

Cash welfare assistance is provided to about 15 percent of Oakland's population, less than the total number in poverty. The dilemma of the

working poor on the one hand, and the problems of getting eligible families to programs are illustrated by the 1980 Census, which found that over one-third of the families receiving assistance had incomes above the official poverty line and that barely half (51.5 percent) of families below the poverty line received assistance.

(Areas of Oakland in which welfare recipiency includes at least half of all families with children under 18 is shown in one of several removable maps on the back cover.)

The direct costs of the welfare system to local government are enormous. Even though benefits are small (for example, AFDC recipients currently receive abut $194 monthly per person for a family of three), Alameda County spends over $200 million annually for welfare programs, including about $130 million for Oakland residents.

Summary: Factors that put Oakland's infants, children, and youth at risk for persistent poverty begin with the environments where they live and the opportunities available to their adult parents. Family poverty has increased since 1970, especially among those families headed by single women. Today, the poor are more concentrated and isolated from people and institutions that connect families to information, employment, and services.

Poverty among prime-aged adults has become a story of chronic labor force disadvantages and increased single-parent families. Unemployment has remained high and significant numbers of people of color are out of the labor force altogether. When work is found, today's jobs often require more skills for less pay. Full-time employment no longer guarantees a stable earnings capacity and a high school diploma has less value than it did 10 years ago. The new urban landscape in which many entry-level and former manufacturing workers seek jobs, imposes its greatest hardships on women of color and Black men.

The consequence of labor force disadvantages among adult men and women combined with other factors has created unprecedented numbers of poor female-headed families in Oakland. One contributing factor for Black families may be the small pool of economically marriageable men aged 25 to 34.

In the next two chapters the focus turns to the infants, children, and youth themselves, revealing a pattern of risk that unnecessarily threatens so many young lives in Oakland.

Chapter 3: Infancy and Childhood

Poor women are more likely to have small babies at risk for physical, mental, and learning disadvantages .

A. Health

In Oakland, as in central cities across this country, poor health encumbers the lives of people trapped in persistent poverty. From birth, and even before, the poor often do not receive the care necessary for a healthy beginning.

Oakland is a regional center for the health care industry. As home to a complex of hospitals and medical institutions, Oakland offers sophisticated, modern medical care for much of the East Bay's populace.

But numerous North and West Oakland neighborhoods – and every single census tract in East Oakland – have been designated as "medically underserved areas" by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This designation is based in part on the prevalence of poverty, the shortage of primary care physicians, and high infant mortality rates.

1. Infant Deaths

Babies born into poor families face greater risks of malnutrition, infectious disease, and permanent disorders than those born into families with greater resources. But the grimmest results of impoverished infancy are the infant deaths which occur all too frequently. The simple fact is: poor babies are dying needlessly.

The infant mortality rate (deaths of infants who are born alive but die during the first year of life per 1,000 live births) is used throughout the world as an indicator of a nation's overall health, reflecting the economic, educational, and social well-being of a society. The United States, with an infant mortality rate of 10.7, currently ranks sixteenth in the world.

Infant mortality in Oakland's poor neighborhoods soars above the national rate. For the past decade, infant mortality in Oakland has been a public concern, largely because of the 1978 discovery that neighborhoods in East Oakland had an extremely high infant mortality rate, 26 deaths per 1,000 live births.

To counteract this infant death trend, the California Department of Health Services initiated the Oakland Perinatal Health Project in 1979, which allocated funds to support community-based programs providing comprehensive prenatal care to residents of Oakland's poor neighborhoods. Largely because of this three-year effort, the infant mortality rate in East Oakland was reduced to 16.5 per 1,000 live births by 1982.

Since then, however, the infant mortality rate for Oakland's poor neighborhoods has

remained high. Table 3-1 shows the 1981-84 three-year average infant mortality rates for Oakland's high risk neighborhoods. During the same period, the Alameda County rate averaged 10.0.

These seven low-income neighborhoods are among ten Health Planning Areas in Alameda County that have been identified as "high-risk" due to high rates of infant mortality. There are a total of 37 Health Planning Areas in the whole county.

2. At Greatest Risk

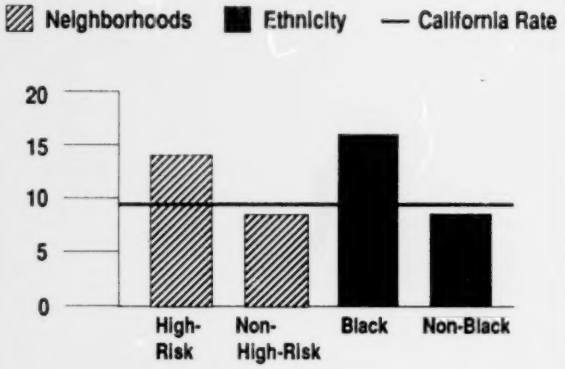
Black babies born into poverty are at the greatest risk. In 1984, the latest year for which complete statistics are available, the Black infant mortality rate in Alameda County was 17.5. The rate was the highest in the county for any populations and 136 percent higher than the non-Black rate.

And Black childbearing families are concentrated in Oakland. Although only 23 percent of the county's childbearing women live in Oakland's poor neighborhoods, 64 percent of all Black childbearing women live there. More than one-third of all births to Black women were among residents of three East Oakland high-risk neighborhoods.

Table 3-1: Infant Mortality Rates in High-Risk Neighborhoods in Oakland, 1981-84

High-risk neighborhood	1981-84 Infant mortality rate
North Oakland/Emeryville	15.7
North Broadway	14.3
West Oakland	18.3
Highland	10.9
East Oakland I	15.0
East Oakland II	17.5
East Oakland III	13.5
Alameda County	10.0

Table 3-2: Infant Mortality Rates, Alameda County 1985
Per 1000 Live Births



According to statistics from the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, the infant mortality rate in the high-risk neighborhoods of Alameda County averaged 13.9 from 1978 to 1984. This rate was 59.8 percent greater than in the remaining parts of the county. Even among the disadvantaged, Black infants fared worse. In the same period, 1978 to 1984, the average Black infant mortality rate was 79.3 percent higher than the rest of the county.

These disparities are not subsiding. Table 3-2 shows group differences in infant mortality rates for 1985.

3. Dangers of Low Birthweight

Though sad and disturbing, infant mortality is only part of a larger problem: low birthweight. Nationally, low birthweight babies (less than five and one-half pounds at birth) account for fully three-fourths of infant deaths within the first year. But most low birthweight babies live, and they are at risk from the beginning. In addition to risking death, they risk long stays in neonatal intensive care, recurring physical

problems, mental disability, learning disabilities, child abuse, and a host of other disadvantages.

Of all infants born in Alameda County, about seven percent are low birthweight. This proportion has remained constant over the past decade. Among certain subgroups, however, the proportions of low birthweight babies are much higher.

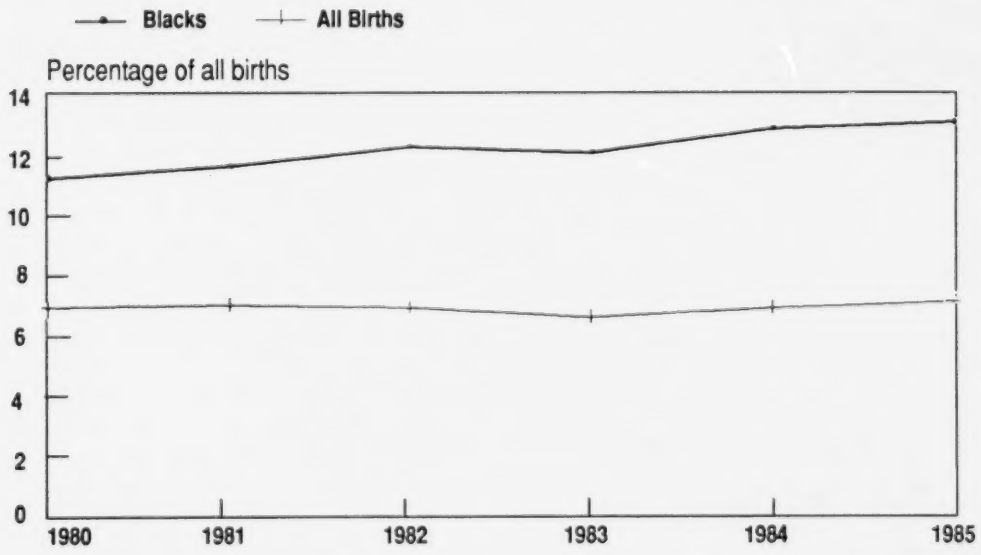
Teen Parents and Low Birthweight. In 1985 in Alameda County, 3.2 percent of all births were to teens 17 or under. Among Black births, 7.2 percent were in this age group. There are 13 census tracts in West and East Oakland combined in which over 9.5 percent of all births were to teens. (See maps in the Appendix for location of those tracts). Teenagers are at great risk of having low birthweight babies. In fact, 5 percent of all low birthweight babies in the county were to teens under 18.

Poverty and Low Birthweight. In the county's high-risk poor neighborhoods, over 10 percent of all births are low birthweight. Among Black births, the incidence of low birthweight is even higher, over 13 percent in 1985. This represents nearly twice the rate in the county as a whole and more than twice the rate for whites, Asians and Hispanics. This higher rate of Black low birthweight contributes greatly to Alameda County having the highest rate among 38 counties ranked in California. As Table 3-3 shows, the incidence of low birthweight among Black births in Alameda County has increased since 1980.

Small infants are not only at greatest risk of dying, but, for those infants that live – and the majority do – the mental and physical disabilities that they suffer and the expense of caring for them takes an immense toll on families and the community. In addition to the observable dis-

Continued on page 34

Table 3-3: Low Birthweight Babies, Alameda County, 1980-1986



A Healthy Baby

Allison Mays-Reed, holding her three-week-old son asleep in her arms, recalls an earlier pregnancy that ended in tragedy. "It was supposed to be my second to last visit before I delivered," Allison remembers. "I lay down on my side and the doctor checked me out with his hands. But he checked too long. When I turned over, I saw that his face was beet red. `When did the baby last move?' he asked me. `It moved today,' I told him. He sent me for a sonogram. But it showed nothing. The baby was dead."

The fetus had been struck suddenly by an infection. "I had just turned 20-years-old when it happened, and it took me six years to decide to try again," says Allison. "I was determined to bring something home this time."

At the time of her first pregnancy, Allison, a graduate of Oakland's Fremont High School, was married and had attended Alameda College for a year and a half. She left her fashion merchandising studies in order to work full-time in a boutique. With her insurance coverage, she was able to afford the care of a private physician.

Both pregnancies, her tragic first and the second which gave her Kyle Anthony, involved sudden and devastating complications. By the time Allison became pregnant for the second time, she had remarried but was no longer working and didn't have insurance. Having spent the first four months of her pregnancy in Riverside, Allison and her husband returned to Oakland where they stayed with her mother and grandmother in the San Antonio section.

Fourteen weeks pregnant and receiving Medi-Cal, Allison could not find a private doctor in Oakland who would receive her that late. Allison's younger sister had successfully delivered through the YWCA Perinatal Clinic and recommended it to her. The Y on Webster Street offers comprehensive obstetric care to women up to the 30th week of pregnancy. Care at the Y also includes health education, nutrition counseling, and psychosocial evaluation. In addition, the Y offers clinics in teen pregnancy, family planning and well-baby care, as well as counseling on drug abuse, housing, and domestic violence.

The program is part of a system called "Perinatal Outreach". Highland Hospital, contributes doctors and midwives to county and community clinics in Oakland, such as the Y, which provide additional services to patients. Nearly all of the patients at the Y are poor and considered high- risk in their potential for negative birth outcomes.

"I started at the Y in the latter part of my fourth month," Allison says. "I loved it." At first she was seen twice a week by certified nurse-midwives and physicians at Highland Hospital, as well as by the watchful eye of public health nurse Judy Klein. "The pregnancy was going fine until the seventh month. Then, all hell broke loose," said Allison.

Allison's glucose test, which detects gestational diabetes, indicated that Allison had become diabetic during the pregnancy. Her sugar level was unbalanced, with the baby receiving the spillover.

"I was admitted to Highland Hospital in January for what . . . turned out to be a five-

Allison with Kyle Anthony

day stay," says Allison.

Suddenly the pregnancy became a nightmare. Allison, who expresses a great fear of needles, was diagnosed as a class 'B' diabetic, which among other things meant that she would have to inject herself with insulin twice a day.

Maintaining the regimen at home meant shopping more carefully, cooking differently, and changing the schedule of meals, as well as taking the injections. The entire family was involved. They were supportive, but scared.

There is "a phenomenal difference" between a high-risk pregnancy, such as Allison's, and a normal one, according to Judy Klein at the Y. "A high-risk pregnancy costs a lot more financially. But not only that, there are also costs in terms of the toll it takes on the body as well as psychological costs," she explains.

Allison's prime defenses against the fear and stress during that seventh month were the support of her family and her interest in learning all there was to know about gestational diabetes. She and her husband participated in the Lamaze natural childbirth classes. They heeded the nutritionist's directions. The whole family took care in making sure that the shopping was done, that food was prepared just right, and that Allison would always have transportation once a week to the Y and twice a week to Highland Hospital for stress tests. Meanwhile, Allison read.

"I read everything I could get my hands on," Allison recalls. "I was insatiable. I wanted to know what was the deal. Could I breastfeed? Was the insulin affecting Kyle physically? Mentally? I knew it was affecting me."

In the middle of the 37th week, Allison's doctors decided to induce labor. Allison describes another series of bell-curve pains: ten hours at a time for three days. But there was no dilation, and the last of her fears had come true. She had to have a Caesarean section. On Saturday, March 21 at 11:19 a.m., Kyle Anthony Reed was born, six pounds and one ounce.

"He wasn't supposed to scream," Allison recalls, with her healthy infant in her arms. "But the moment he was born, he screamed!" Kyle's lungs were fine. "And I went to sleep."

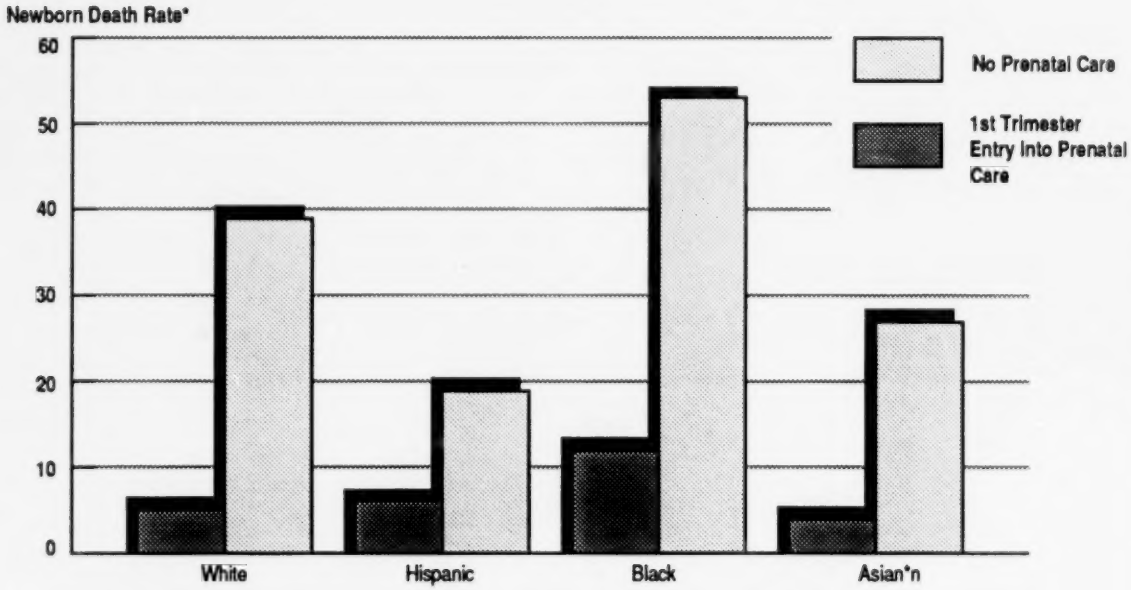
Judy Klein, who is still in close touch with Allison, looks back warmly on her client's success. "She spent her entire pregnancy making sure that this baby was going to live," Judy recalls. "She worked very, very hard at it. She did a good job."

Continued from page 31
abilities, such as cerebral palsy and lifelong learning problems, a low birthweight baby born into a poor family puts an even greater strain on that family. Divorce rates and child abuse are higher among families of low birthweight babies. Highly associated with poverty to begin with, the effects of a low birthweight birth in a poor family serve to perpetuate the spiral of poverty.

4. Improving Services

There is no mystery concerning what is needed to improve birth outcomes. For years the medical literature has confirmed the success of early comprehensive prenatal care in increasing birthweight and decreasing infant mortality. Tables 3-4 and 3-5 show the greatly increased risk of dying or being born at a low birthweight among California's newborns whose mothers received no prenatal care. Identification of high-risk populations and the provision of comprehensive prenatal care to those groups has drastically reduced appalling low birthweight and infant mortality rates. When the proper care has been

Table 3-4: Newborn Death Rates in California by Entry Into Prenatal Care, 1983



*Newborn (neonatal) death rate is per 1,000 live births. Newborn deaths refer to those occuring in the first 28 days of life.
** Asian includes Japanese, Filipino, and Chinese.

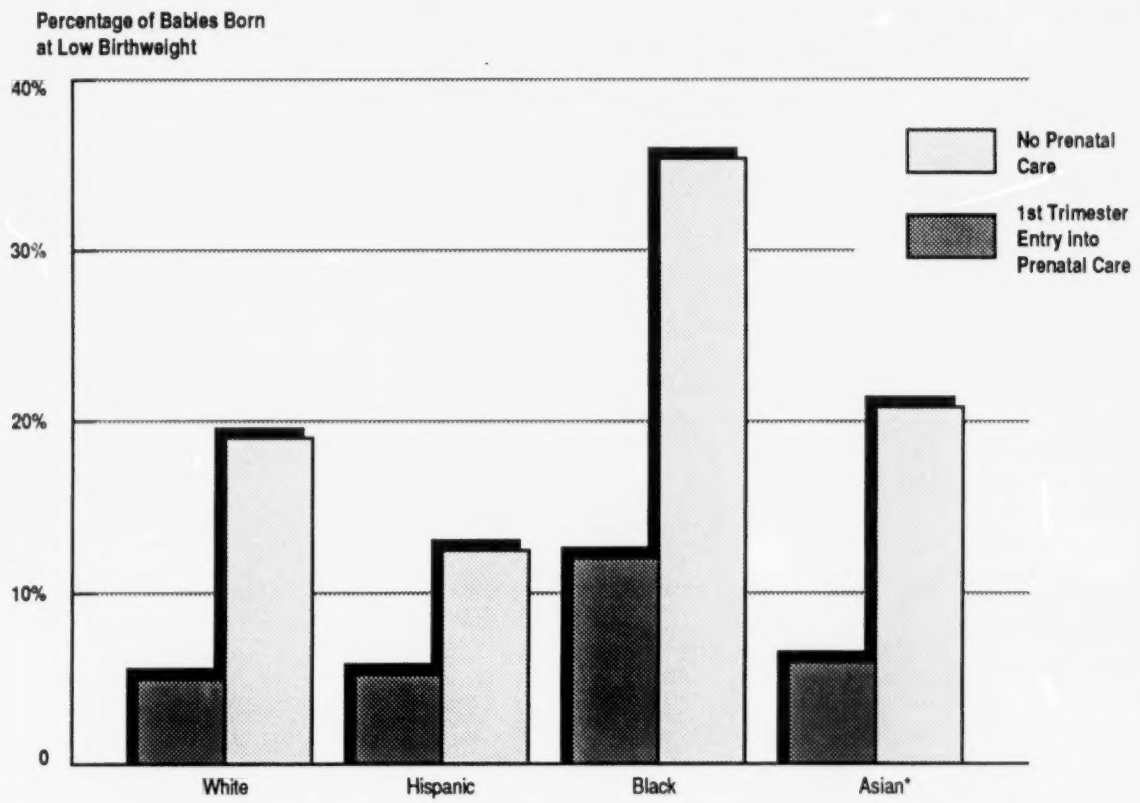
Source: State of California, Department of Health Services, Table 83P-8AB. Taken from Back to Basics, a Report of the Children's Research Institute of California and the Southern California Child Health Netowrk, 1986.

available here in Oakland, we have had healthier babies.

But access to prenatal care for many women continues to be a problem of crisis proportions. In all of Alameda County, there are only 17 private obstetricians who accept Medi-Cal patients for prenatal care and delivery. In Oakland, there are only five or six.

According to a 1987 report prepared by the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, 20 percent of women in the county did not begin prenatal care during the first trimester of their

Table 3-5: Low Birthweight Babies in California by Entry into Prenatal Care, 1983



* Asian inlcudes Japanese, Filipino, and Chinese.

Source: State of California, Department of Health Services, Table 83P-8AB. Taken from Back to Basics, a report of the Children's Research Institute of California and the Southern California Child Health Network, 1986.

pregnancy. And the incidence of last trimester or no prenatal care at all were highest among Black and Asian women (10 percent) and Hispanic women (9 percent). In the Health Planning Areas in West Oakland and in parts of East Oakland, 12 percent or more of the women giving birth received only last trimester or no prenatal care.

And there have been increasing demands placed on the maternal and infant health services provided by the community-based clinics. In the decade from 1977 to 1986, the number of births in Alameda County increased each year, from 14,280 to 19,564. By 1986, 37 percent more births occurred than in 1977.

This situation will not improve without a commitment by the community to take those steps necessary to prevent low birthweight and resulting infant deaths, disease, and lifelong disabilities.

B. Education

As mentioned earlier, one of the possible consequences of low birthweight can be learning disabilities. Low birthweight, however, is only one of the many factors that contribute to low educational achievement in poor communities.

1. Preschool Education

Despite widespread acceptance of the benefits of preschool education for poor children, access to preschool education for the poor in Oakland is very limited.

For many years early childhood education scholars and practitioners have argued that quality preschool education is an essential ingredient for elementary school achievement, particularly for poor minority children. The Perry Preschool Program in Ypsilanti, Michigan was the focus of an impressive study which documented the positive educational and life benefits that could be traced to that preschool experience. The study found that in addition to performing better in kindergarten, those who went to preschool also fared better as young adults.

The study followed the preschoolers through age 19 and compared them with similar youngsters who had not had the early preschool experience. The results displayed in Table 3-6 were that those who attended preschool generally did better in school, were less likely to be arrested, and had stronger employment records. Specifically by age 19, twice as many non-preschoolers had been arrested; one-third more non-preschoolers had dropped out of high school; 48 percent of the preschoolers were currently employed as opposed to 29 percent of the non-preschoolers; and 45 percent of the preschoolers were supporting themselves through their own or their spouses' incomes while for the non-preschoolers 24 percent were. In short a quality preschool education appears to be one key ingredient in breaking the cycle of poverty.

Yet, in Oakland, most poor minority children do not have access to quality preschool education. The Alameda County Social Services Agency estimates that as of August 1987 there were just under 11,500 two- to five-year-olds in Oakland receiving AFDC, all of whom would benefit from preschool education. Since there are many poor children in Oakland who do not receive AFDC, one can assume that the total number of poor two- to five-year-olds could be greater.

But for these children the opportunities to receive preschool education are few. Oakland Head Start, this year, is serving approximately 600 three- to five-year-olds. The Oakland Unified School District has a preschool program that serves 505 three- to five-year-olds, 414 of whom are AFDC recipients. Subsidized childcare preschool programs provide services to about an additional 2,700 from ages two to five. Many of those children in preschool and childcare settings are having exceptionally strong developmental experiences. Oakland has many fine programs for preschoolers. Nonetheless, with a minimum of 11,500 poor children needing preschool education, less than 4,000 are receiving it. Clearly, there is an unmet need that numbers in the

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Table 3-6: Benefits of Preschool Education for Low-Income Children

Delinquency findings

Arrested by age 19:

for every 100 with preschool	22
for every 100 with no preschool	43

Education Findings

Years in special education, during elementary school (K-12):

those with preschool	1.8 years
those with no preschool	3.8 years

Drop out of high school:

for every 100 with preschool	35
for every 100 with no preschool	55

Attend college or job training courses:

for every 100 with preschool	38
for every 100 with no preschool	21

Employment Findings

Currently employed:

for every 100 with preschool	48
for every 100 with no preschool	29

Self supporting:

for every 100 with preschool	45
for every 100 with no preschool	25

Source: Findings of High/Scope Educational Research Foundation Longitudinal Study of the Perry Preschool Program in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Taken from: Preventing Unemployment: A Case for Early Childhood Education, a report of the Future Employability/Early Childhood Development Task Force, Minneapolis Community Business Employment Alliance, December, 1985.

thousands.

2. Elementary School Education

Many poor children attend elementary schools in which most of the other students are also poor. Many of these children are doing very well. Many others are not.

One measure of school achievement used by the Oakland Unified School District is the California Assessment Program (CAP). This test, designed and administered by the California State Department of Education, measures the effectiveness of curricula and instructional programs of schools in local school districts. The test is administered to students in grades 3, 6, 8, and 12. The areas tested are reading, mathematics, and written expression.

According to the Profiles of the schools published by the district, there are 51,021 students enrolled in the Oakland public schools. The school population is 12.2 percent Hispanic, 9.7 percent white, 61.8 percent Black, 15.8 percent Asian, and 5 percent other. Students receiving AFDC total 43.1 percent. There are 21 schools with elementary grades in the Oakland Unified School District in which the proportion of AFDC recipiency among students is above 50 percent. The enrollment for all but two of those schools is over 70 percent Black.

The average level of AFDC recipiency at these schools combined is 70.5 percent; the average level of Black enrollment is 82.9 percent; and the average level of Hispanic enrollment is 15 percent. The total number of students enrolled in these schools is 12,780. (This number includes 1,429 students from middle schools that include many seventh and eighth graders.) In 14 of these 21 schools, the CAP scores for all three tests – reading, written expression, and mathematics – all fell below the district average in years 1984, 1985, and 1986 for the third and the sixth grades. Seven schools were above the district average, with three of these consistently above.

These CAP scores contrast sharply with the 23 elementary schools in Oakland that had 20 percent or fewer AFDC recipients. In these 23 schools combined, the average level of AFDC recipiency is 7.7 percent; the average Black enrollment is 42.5 percent and Hispanic enrollment is 7.4 percent. The total number of students enrolled in these schools is 7,634. Of these 23 schools, all but four demonstrated consistent average scores above the district average for the third and the sixth grade for the years 1984, 1985, and 1986. Four schools did not demonstrate this consistent above-district performance.

These findings portend a future for poor children attending predominantly low-income schools which puts them at extreme risk for dropping out, entering the work force with inadequate skills and resultant persistent poverty.

3. Middle and Junior High Schools

The trend in middle and junior high schools follows that of the elementary schools, but the demarcations are more severe. For 1986-87, Profiles are provided for 15 of 16 middle and junior high schools. Of the 15, seven have student enrollments that are over 60 percent AFDC recipients. The remaining eight include two schools with over 40 percent AFDC enrollment, two with between 20 and 25 percent, and the other four with less than 20 percent. Of the seven junior high schools in which over 60 percent of the students receive AFDC, six are over 80 percent Black and one has an enrollment that is 60 percent Black and Hispanic combined. At all seven, the CAP scores are well below the district average on every measure for the years 1984 through 1986.

At the four middle and junior high schools in which the AFDC recipiency is less than 20 percent, all score above the district average, except for one in which the scores fall above and below the district average. That one is 93 percent Black; the others are all less than 50 percent Black. Again the pattern is that poor minority children going to predominantly low-income schools are not acquiring the basic skills that will

lead to college readiness, skill readiness, and opportunity.

The underachievement of Oakland's children in elementary, middle, and junior high schools is a problem for all of Oakland. We must collectively develop strategies to improve educational opportunity. When a poor child enters high school without a solid foundation the chances of high school underachievement and dropping out are great.

Tutorial

Elementary and junior high school students in East Oakland are learning to believe in their academic abilities and getting help turning those beliefs into achievement.

The Allen Temple Baptist Church is the site for two very different tutorial programs, Hi-Rise and Project Interface. While the programs are separated by funding sources, student eligibility rules, and different buildings, they are wedded by a common belief: all students can overcome educational obstacles with disciplined teaching.

Each Monday and Wednesday afternoon, Mayisha and Rashida, two Oakland third graders, can be found in the Sunday school building where the Hi-Rise Tutorial Program meets. Enrollment is open to any child in kindergarten through sixth grade, and students may come for free all year or whenever their grades require it.

Mayisha and Rashida are regulars. Mrs. Julia Calhoun, the program's director for the last five of its 16-year history, directs the girls to a study table. Still wearing their school uniforms, they come with their homework and the knowledge that Mrs. Calhoun means business.

They are happy to be there after school, the girls tell a visitor, as they break out their phonics lesson without being told. They are happy to recite the difference between a consonant and a vowel to one of three church volunteers without being asked twice. But most of all, they are happy that the phonics lesson involves a lot of drawing with crayons.

Mrs. Calhoun and the rest of her staff are pleased to be there, too. The program began with the need to bring Sunday school students up to speed, because many had trouble reading the scriptures. But due in part to the "quiet place for spirit" provided by Mrs. Calhoun and the other volunteers, Hi-Rise now reaches beyond its denomination to students from a wide range of schools across the city.

"We just want to share with the children," says Mrs. Calhoun. "They bring us their report cards or we get thank you calls from teachers and that's our pay – the good feeling within."

Located on the other side of the church grounds and spread out over several classrooms, Project Interface, the result of collaboration between Allen Temple and the Northern California Council of Black Professional Engineers, has a different mission.

The 65 seventh through ninth graders currently enrolled must be prepared every Monday through Wednesday afternoon to come to a math and science program more highly structured than some schools. Project Interface offers a unique chance for students capable of doing college prep work in the sciences, but who are not.

"We work with kids who could and should be achieving at the college prep level," explains Dr. Ann Boule Wilson, who has been the project's no-nonsense director since it was started in 1982. "All other programs work with kids who are already achieving. The kids here are underachievers. So, we're unique in that."

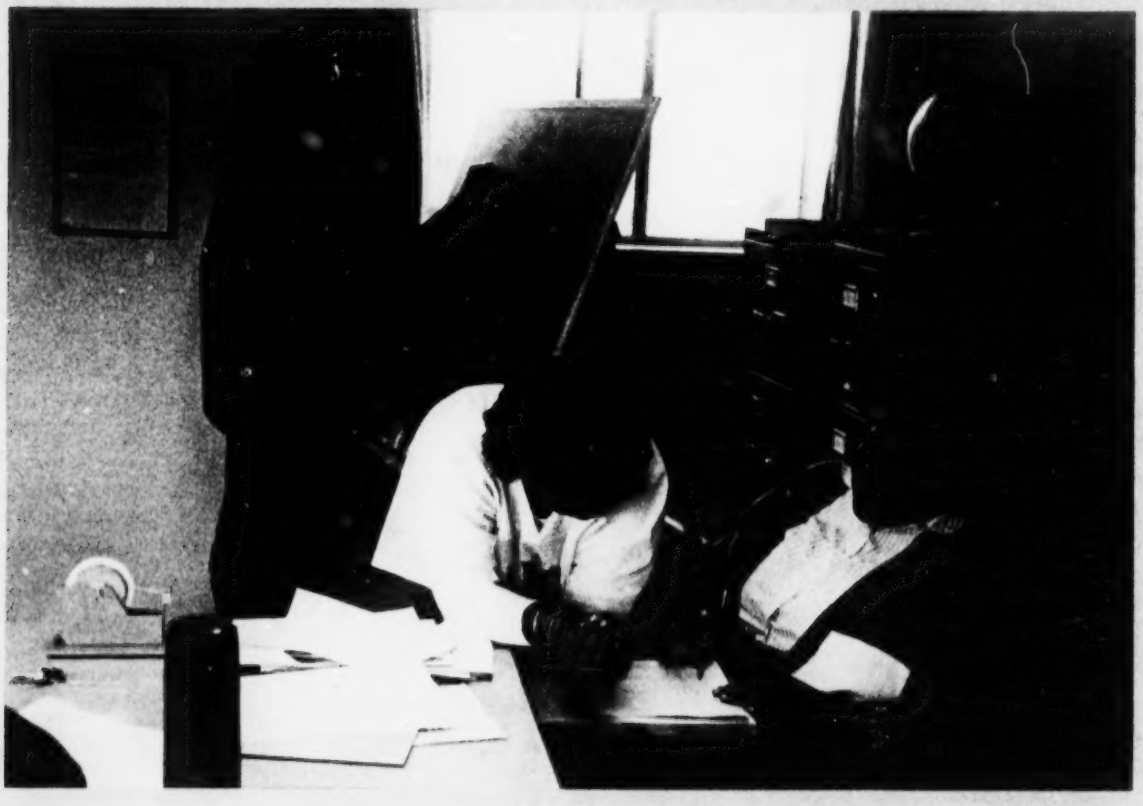
The students, however, do not remain underachievers. A status report of ninth grade graduates of Project Interface showed that among those who could be contacted

four years later, 85 percent were enrolled in college prep classes and 40 percent were averaging "B" or above grades.

In small, rigorous study groups taught by paid college students, the kids who are referred to Project Interface rotate over time through math, chemistry, biology, and physics classes. Among the other programs offered to students are a Saturday computer class, the role model/mentor series, counseling services, and frequent field trips and awards. There is also a career education component which allows students hands-on experience with high technology research under way at the Harbor Bay Business Park.

According to Dr. Wilson, the key to progress among Project Interface students is a challenging and disciplined study environment run by a well-prepared staff that can maintain control. Teachers must also believe that their children can succeed.

"What we try to do here is make learning fun," she explains. "But we don't mess around, and we expect you to achieve. We've had pretty good success, and of course we've had our share of disappointments."



Fellowship Hall, where the Project Interface classrooms are located, has the look of an experimental school setting, complete with sounding bells, giggling students, and a dynamic principal, Dr. Wilson, who alternates between "How're you doing today?" and "I thought we were going to think before we act, right?"

In one room, eight students in a physics class learn the difference between force and acceleration. Down the hallway, a college chemistry major takes votes on a density experiment: Will jelly sink or float when dropped into a flask of red liquid?

In another classroom a few doors from Dr. Wilson's office, three instructors prepare a biology experiment that will reveal the effects of different solutions on plant growth after four weeks of observation.

A teacher explains the procedure: "Everyone is going to get a piece of ivy."

"Like the one they use in the hospital?" asks a smart aleck.

The teacher isn't fazed. Marcus and Ian, two seventh graders from different schools in East Oakland, receive a small pot with soil, a stem of ivy to plant, and a small container with a different liquid. Ian carefully pours yellow corn oil into his; Marcus pours blue fertilizer into his own.

"What do you think will happen to yours, Ian?" asks the teacher.

"Mine will grow big and strong and kill people," Ian hypothesizes.

"Write that down," the teacher replies.

The children are taught that scientists must record their predictions, no matter what. Ian writes it down, because he plans to be a scientist one day. If Ian fulfills his potential and Project Interface accomplishes its mission, he will be one.

Chapter 4: Adolescence

Life options are limited for Oakland's youth living in poverty.

Adolescence, the prelude to adulthood, is the critical time in young people's lives when options are discovered and courses are set. But for too many of Oakland's teenagers, adolescence offers few options and the course that is set threatens to be a life of continued deprivation. The scarcity of resources which encumber the lives of infants and children in poverty has consequences for the young adult.

- Forty-seven percent of Oakland's comprehensive high school students live in families receiving AFDC.
- A little more than a third of Oakland's seniors in comprehensive high schools take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for college admission, but only one in nine goes on to a four-year University of California or California State University institution.
- One in three students drops out of high school altogether.
- One in four teens out of school and in the labor force is unemployed, and about two-thirds of out-of-school teens are not in the labor force at all; in some areas of Oakland, all out-of-school youth are jobless regardless of their high school graduation status.

In this chapter, we will examine the school, after-school, social, and work environments of adolescent life and show how the options for a healthy and productive life are limited for many of Oakland's at-risk youth.

A. School

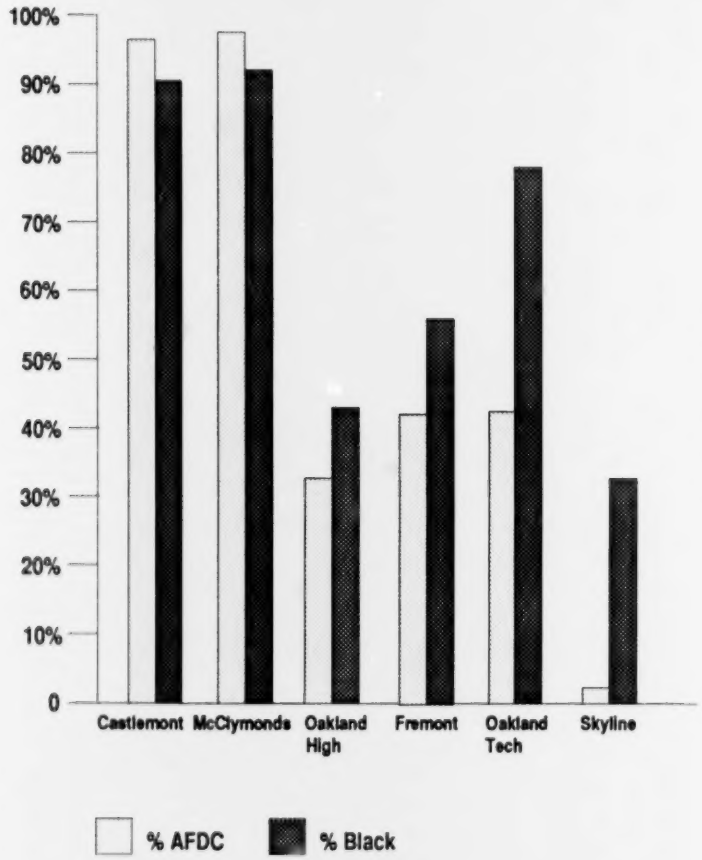
1. Skills

There are two Oaklands, separated from each other by income and race outside the classroom, and by achievement scores, dropping out, and college readiness inside the classroom. Childhood membership in the Oakland that remains isolated from resources by poverty often gives rise to young adults at risk for poor skills, teen pregnancy, unemployment, low-paying jobs, welfare dependency, and persistent poverty.

Like many inner city high school populations, the Oakland Unified School District is predominantly Black (64 percent). Forty-seven percent of all students live in homes receiving AFDC. Table 4-1 shows the percentage of students on AFDC compared to the percentage of Black students for each of Oakland's six comprehensive senior high schools. The schools with the

43

Table 4-1: Race and AFDC Recipiency
Oakland's Six Comprehensive High Schools, 1986-87



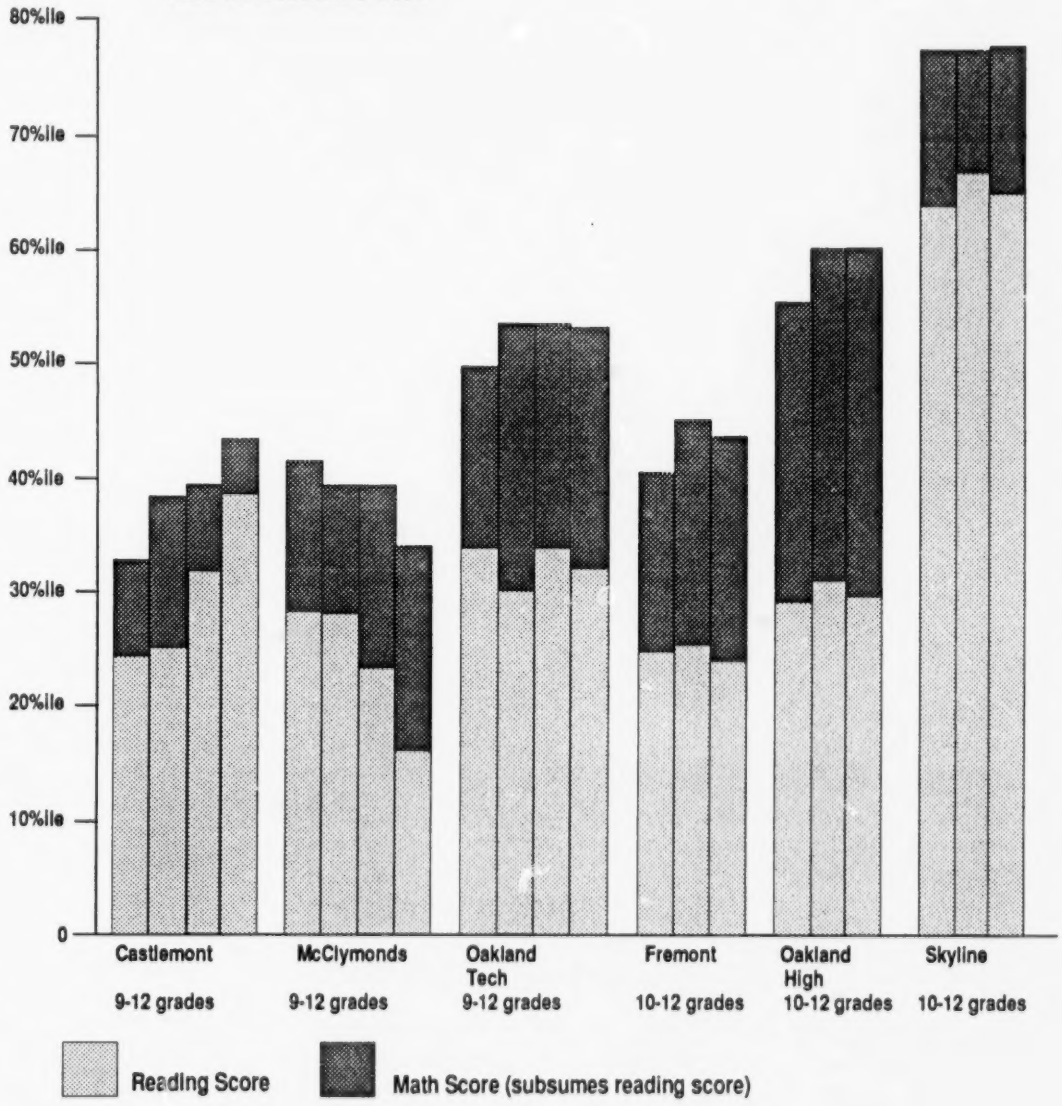
Source: Oakland Unified School District School Profiles, 1986-87

highest percentages of poor Black students are the same schools with the lowest achievement scores across grades on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS).

As Table 4-2 suggests, there are strategies which can improve this situation. Castlemont, for example, demonstrates steady progress and the math scores at Oakland Tech stand out.

Income is probably more critical in defining the two Oaklands than race, as revealed by a comparison between Castlemont and McCly-

Table 4-2: Oakland Comprehensive High Schools
CTBS Achievement Data in Percentiles
1986-87 Academic Year



Source: Oakland Unified School District School Profiles, 1986-87

monds at opposite ends of the flatlands and Skyline in the hills. Most students from flatland areas *leave* high school with fewer academic skills than students who *enter* high school in the hills. The average student at Castlemont in East Oakland and at McClymonds in West Oakland is Black (91.4 percent and 92.8 percent, respectively) and lives in a family receiving AFDC (96.9 percent and 97.5 percent). At Castlemont, s/he is likely to score close to the bottom third percentile range in reading and writing during all four years, with slightly higher scores in math. The typical McClymonds student fares similarly. Many students at Skyline are Black (45.2 percent), but almost none comes from a family on AFDC (2.2 percent). The typical Skyline student maintains a steady academic course, testing well above average in all subjects covered on the CTBS.

As for grade equivalency, the average Castlemont student consistently performs at least one year below grade level, every year, in every subject. At McClymonds the average ninth grader enters the school with an 8.3 grade reading level; four years later, that same student is reading at only a 9.6 grade level. Writing problems are even more severe. While entering McClymonds with a written language grade equivalency of 7.0, the average student there graduates with a writing capability equal to a little more than eighth grade.

At Skyline, grade equivalency remains constant, since tenth graders enter with English and math skills at the 12.6 grade level and graduate with the same level of proficiency.

2. College Readiness

One example of diminished options flowing from poor academic achievement is the degree of college readiness among low-income students in Oakland. High school seniors interested in going to college must take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) as a major criterion for admission. The district median on the verbal and math parts of the test falls somewhat short of the national average by 57 and 84 points respectively. Unfortunately, the discrepancy would be a lot greater were it not for the Skyline scores.

Table 4-3 shows a comparison between McClymonds, Castlemont, and Skyline. First, the students from poor neighborhoods show a median combined SAT score about 29 percent short of Skyline student scores. Second, the table indicates that the pool of students taking the test is in a disturbing state of decline. At Castlemont the number of students taking the SAT has decreased by 16 percent each year since 1983 (two years), with only 14.1 percent of the senior class taking the test in 1985-86. McClymonds has experienced a decline of about half that much in the same period. Skyline, on the other hand, has seen a net increase of more than 11 percent in the last two years.

Third, in a survey by the Oakland Alliance, McClymonds and Skyline students topped the list of schools with the highest percentage of seniors predicting that they would go to four-year colleges or universities – 39.8 percent and 33.7 percent, respectively. Among the Skyline seniors, 192 or 50.6 percent had taken the SAT. At McClymonds, however, only 49 or 27.3 percent had actually taken the test. There is an apparent mismatch among many McClymonds seniors

Table 4-3: College Readiness (1985-86)

	Combined median SAT score	% of srs. taking test	% srs. said they'd go to 4-yr. college
Castlemont	644	14.1%	18.5%
McClymonds	654	27.3%	39.8%
Skyline	911	50.6%	33.7%

Source: Oakland Unified School District; State Department of Education Annual Report, 1986

regarding aspirations and the actions necessary to realize them.

3. Dropouts

While failing to attend college can reduce life options, the greater risk for diminished options is dropping out from high school altogether. In recent years, Oakland dropouts outnumber seniors bound for four-year colleges about three-fold. The ongoing debate nationally and locally concerning the definition of a dropout makes exact numbers hard to come by. However, there is little disagreement over the fact that dropping out is often a symptom as well as a cause of persistent poverty.

The dropout rate for Oakland has not yet been definitively determined. A meaningful measure of how many students leave Oakland's high schools each year, however, can be estimated by comparing attrition rates compiled by both the state and private researchers, as well as by looking at local mobility.

According to the State Department of Education, attrition among Oakland's comprehensive high school students stood at 42 percent in 1985-86. The state's figure merely calculates the ratio of tenth graders in 1982 who graduated three years later, regardless of whether they had transferred to schools out of the district, were institutionalized, or died.

By taking these and other personal reasons into account, researchers in the Policy Analysis for California Education program (PACE) at Berkeley calculated a 33 percent rate of attrition for the same school year, which they contend closely approximates a dropout figure. This roughly coincides with an attrition rate of between 34 percent and 36 percent developed by researchers for the Oakland Alliance.

Given this range of figures, Oakland's high school dropout rate may be estimated at more than a third of each class.

Who drops out? According to the High School and Beyond Survey of California dropouts, the typical dropout is Black or Hispanic, changes schools frequently, and comes from a family with low socio-economic status and an absent father.

In addition, dropouts tend to exhibit early signs of detachment from school: they are poor academic achievers, they are often absent or tardy for reasons other than illness, and they display behavioral problems for which they are sometimes transferred to continuation or alternative schools.

Asked why they drop out, studies show a range of responses. Minority dropouts emphasize poor grades. But minority males cite economic reasons, while females report pregnancy and marriage more frequently than white dropouts. Overall, dropouts report being bored and alienated by school.

Mobility. A major contributor to dropping out is mobility, frequent residence changes resulting in transfers to other schools in or outside the district. Mobility often creates the kind of instability in a student's academic life which leads to dropping out. Low-income students again stand the greatest mobility risk because of tenuous housing circumstance, moving from relative to relative, and other difficulties.

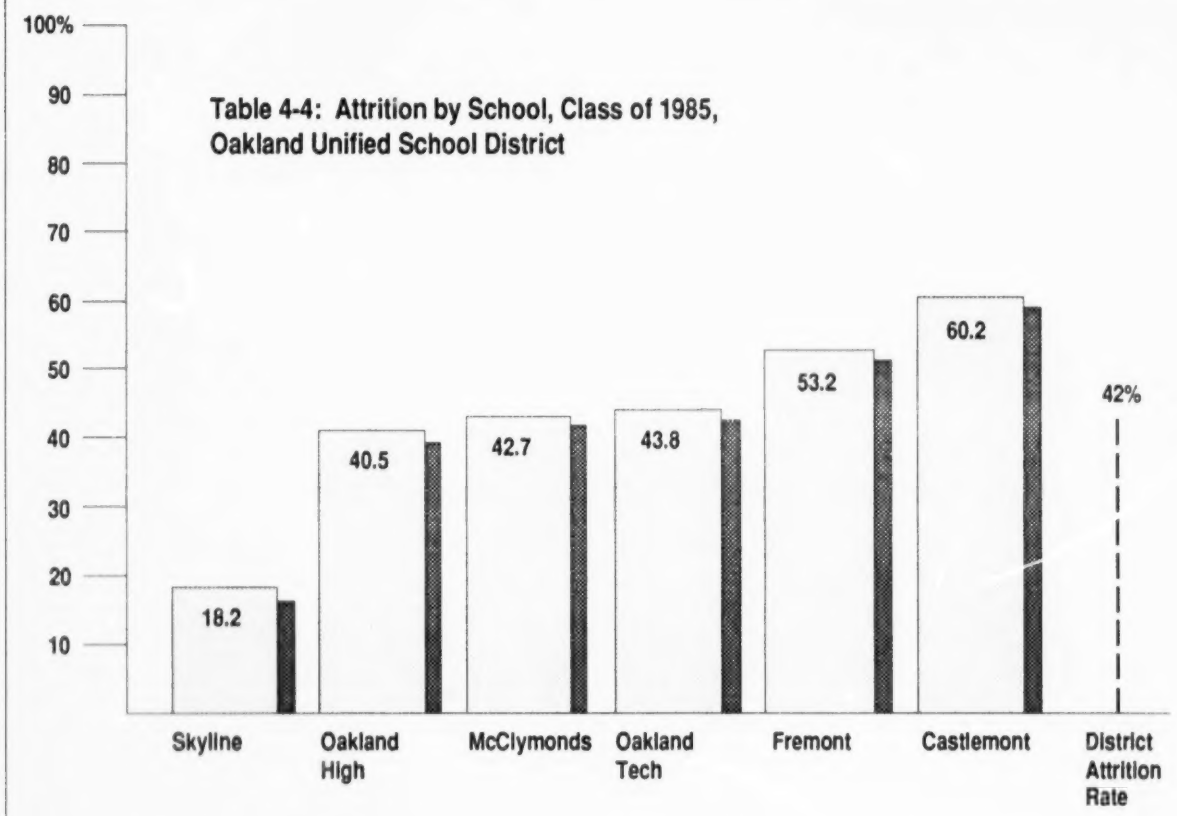
Like other factors contributing to persistent poverty, mobility in Oakland is most acute in low-income neighborhoods. One index of mobility is the attrition rate for each school. While the district-wide attrition rate among the six comprehensive senior high schools was 42 percent in June 1986, the two high schools in East Oakland, Fremont and Castlemont, have the highest rates: 53.25 percent and 60.2 percent, respectively. This trend is illustrated in Table 4-4.

How does dropping out relate to persistent poverty? Dropping out puts one at a particular disadvantage in today's work force where employers have come to expect at least a high school diploma. According to researchers at the University of California at Berkeley, the dropout's labor market disadvantage has long-term, often perma-

nent effects. Dropouts experience higher rates of underemployment, unemployment, and non-participation than graduates. There are several areas in Oakland where more than 70 percent of all recent dropouts are either unemployed or out of the labor force altogether. Their younger age, spotty work histories, lack of workplace norms, and skills deficits make them a higher risk to employers and, in turn, put them at greater risk for lifetimes in poverty.

In 1980, the national unemployment rate among dropouts of all ages was considerably higher than among high school graduates. Thirty-three percent of male dropouts were unemployed, compared to 13 percent among males with at least a high school diploma. For females, the disparity was much smaller, 20 percent compared to 17 percent.

Despite the confusion over the definition of a dropout, it remains clear that the poorest students are at the greatest risk of dropping out and that, in turn, the lack of a high school diploma puts a young adult at much greater risk for persistent poverty. While more is known about



Source: Oakland Unified School District Office of Research; State Dept. of Education Research Division, 1986

who drops out than how many, somewhere between one-third and one-half of all students drop out of Oakland's high schools each year.

4. After School

During adolescent development, the hours spent after school are often as important as the hours in school. Recreational outlets in the arts and sports provide avenues for creative exploration that help teenagers define who they are. So does hanging out.

Unfortunately, because there are few public or private resources available, teenagers in Oakland's poorest neighborhoods spend more time hanging out after school than testing themselves in structured programs. The irony is that, while schools lock up gymnasiums after class hours for lack of supervised play, teenagers spend the evenings on unsupervised streets with all the attendant lures and dangers.

In West Oakland, for instance, McClymonds High School once offered a range of after-school programs; even the Parks Department structured some youth activities. But in the aftermath of Proposition 13 and the cutbacks that followed, the vast majority of these programs ended. The Boys Club stands virtually alone in trying to provide meaningful after-school activities for West Oakland's low-income children and youth. In recent times, however, enrollment has ebbed as a result of the increased drug traffic that threatens the institution from the very corner on which it stands.

B. Work Experience

Joblessness among youth in Oakland follows the same pattern as poor birth outcomes and achievement deficits. It disproportionately affects the poor – in particular, the Black poor.

1. Unemployment

Table 4-5 shows the unemployment rates for out-of-school 16- to 19-year-olds by race and gender, calculated from the 1980 Census. The rate for both male and female Black teens compares only to that of Hispanic males and is more than twice the rate for both male and female white teenagers. Native American females, however, experienced astounding unemployment in 1980. The rates for white, Asian, and Hispanic females are all comparable. Among males, white and Asian teens both experience unemployment rates well below the overall male youth unemployment rate for the city of 27 percent.

Table 4-5: Oakland Unemployed Youth Aged 16 to 19 by Race and Gender, 1980

	16- to 19-year-old Male	Female
Black	36.7%	31.5%
Hispanic	27.5%	14.6%
Asian/Pacific Islander	19.4%	13.3%
Native American	—	60%
White	14.1%	13.5%

Source: 1980 U.S. Census, STF 4B

2. Idleness

More alarming than youth unemployment rates is the level of "idleness" – the combined percentage of out-of-school teens unemployed and not in the labor force – regardless of graduation status.

The usefulness of the idleness index is explained by comparing a youth who is unemployed to one who is out of the labor force altogether. The former is still a member of the civilian labor force and may be only temporarily out of work. The latter may never have worked or is so discouraged or distracted by other activities

that s/he has given up on the labor market. The two youths may have entirely different motivations guiding them. But common to both is their idleness. Both are failing to make the critical transition from school to work. In many areas of Oakland, the idleness of one youth is sure to reinforce the idleness of another, and, like so many other aspects of adolescence, they serve as each other's examples. Thus, the idleness index is useful in showing us where the lines between unemployed/out-of-the-labor force and graduate/dropout have blurred, and where the common expectation for out-of-school youths becomes joblessness.

The percentage of youths aged 16 to 19 who are out of school and either unemployed or not in the labor force in Oakland presents a very unsettling picture of job opportunities. Contrary to the expectations of most analysts, the picture is not much different for high school graduates in their first years out of school. These trends are illustrated in Table 4-6.

In 1980, 5,349 or 25 percent of Oakland's 16- to 19-year-olds were out of school. Among these youths, a little more than half were high school graduates and the rest were not. As seen in the table, more than half of each group – 52 percent of grads and 69 percent of non-grads – was idle. This suggests that the labor market advantage for youths who have finished high school is rather modest, at least in the immediate aftermath of graduation. Overall, only one in nine high school grads did better in Oakland's labor market than non-graduates.

As with each poverty indicator discussed so far, these trends are concentrated in certain neighborhoods (the removable map showing extreme youth idleness may be found in the back folder of this report). In 37 of Oakland's 104 census tracts, 16- to 19-year-old *high school graduates had higher rates of idleness than non-grads* during 1980. In 11 census tracts, there was 100 percent idleness – that is, every out-of-school youth, regardless of education, was jobless in 1980. It is this lack of work experience coupled with the failed expectations of a high school diploma which put young adults dangerously at risk for persistent poverty. Successfully making the transition from school to work is one of the critical developmental roadmarks in early adulthood.

3. Jobs and Job Training

Entry-level jobs do exist for youth in Oakland, but they demand a basic level of education and skills which are in short supply among Oakland's youth in poverty. Furthermore, training programs under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), the major training source in Oakland, must turn away the vast majority of their applicants.

According to a 1986 survey of businesses by the Oakland Private Industry Council, approximately 30,383 entry-level jobs open up each year. Seventy-seven percent of the jobs are replacements, indicating a high rate of turnover; only 23 percent were newly created positions. About three-quarters are service-oriented jobs, which require little skill and experience (e.g., cashiers, guards, clerks, etc.). Wages are low, ranging from the minimum wage to about five dollars an hour. The firms hiring entry-level employees are

Table 4-6: Teen Idleness
Oakland Youths Aged 16 to 19 who are Out of School and Unemployed or Out of the Workforce

	Total out of school	# Idle	% Idle	% of all Idle
H.S. graduates	2,891	1,497	51.78%	46.9%
Not H.S. grads	2,458	1,695	68.96%	53.1%

Source: 1980 U.S. Census, ABAG Cedar data base

small, averaging less than twenty workers. Surprisingly, the survey shows that most jobs are located not in the downtown area, but near predominantly Black, low-income areas (e.g., West Oakland, 30 percent, and Southeast Oakland, 37 percent). But the survey also reports that employer expectations are high. Forty-one percent of employers require at least a high school diploma; 35 percent required that entry-level workers have at least some college experience.

Federally funded job training is provided for Oakland's low-income youth through programs created under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). While JTPA programs are designed for all age groups, about 43 percent of the programs are aimed at youth aged 16 to 21 and make up the bulk of all youth job training programs in the city. Three-quarters of the annual participants are in the 16- to 19-year-old range; almost as many participants are Black, 69 percent, while a large minority are Asian and Pacific Islander, 22.4 percent.

As critical as the JTPA programs are in providing structured skills development for youth both during the school year and the summer time, JTPA is clearly unable to reach enough of the most disadvantaged youth. In 1985-86, about half of youth participants were still in high school, 42 percent were graduates, but only 10 percent were dropouts. Only 10 percent of all participants were female single parents, and their rate of entering employment at the close of their training was considerably lower than other female participants – 31.6 percent and 44.4 percent respectively. A little more than half of the total youth participants came from families receiving some kind of public assistance but their rate of employment was also much lower than non-welfare recipients – 31.2 percent and 42.7 percent respectively.

Finally, JTPA resources are simply stretched too thin to accommodate the number of applicants. Of about 15,000 adult and youth applicants last year, only 1,335 or 8.9 percent were accepted into training programs; a mere five percent is estimated to have been turned away because of failure to meet income eligibility. Five hundred and eighty participants were youth. According to the 1980 Census, however, there were 7,988 16- to 21-year-old youth in poverty in Oakland – and many more near poverty who were also eligible for federally funded job training. Taking the number of youths in poverty alone (who represented less than half of youth participants in 1986), we find that JTPA slots are only available for about one in fourteen applicants. While there are smaller job training providers in Oakland not under JTPA contract, they are hardly enough to fill the large gap in services available to low-income youth.

C. Teen Pregnancy

Adolescent pregnancies may represent the breakpoint for a child – male or female – who has grown up among all the limitations of poverty. Few behaviors serve to limit the life options of teenagers so severely, and few issues describe the cycle of risks attached to persistent poverty so accurately. In Oakland and across the country, teenagers most likely to bear children before they turn 18 live in poverty, lack basic skills, and are disproportionately Black.

The responsibility of parenting demands resources which few adolescents possess. Teenage mothers are often poor achievers in school and lack basic skills. They have neither the job skills nor the access to information necessary to significantly better their socio-economic outlook. Due to the age and unstable living arrangments of these youth, their pregnancies and the care of their infants are mired in risk. Because their pregnancies are often unplanned and the relationships between teen parents are so tenuous, teen mothers are frequently alone.

In Oakland, all of these trends are in evidence: poverty origins in unstable homes, low school achievement, dropping out with few skills, joblessness and welfare dependency, poor birth outcomes, and single-parent homes.

According to data recorded by the East Bay Perinatal Council's Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP), which delivers support services to approximately one-third of Oakland's teenage mothers, most teen mothers come from single-parent homes often characterized by poor relationships with their mothers. Most of the household heads are either unemployed (29 percent) or out of the labor force and receiving AFDC. Of those who are employed, only 22 percent are skilled laborers. The teen mothers themselves in the AFLP caseload are generally described as poor achievers. It is estimated that four out of five do not finish high school.

According to the Children's Defense Fund, it is this combination of poverty and instability, lack of basic skills, and the demands of a dependent infant which lead 85.2 percent of Black single mothers under 25 to AFDC.

Why pregnancy? Teens get pregnant and have children for a variety of reasons, few of which are well understood. Case managers with the AFLP contend, however, that many pregnancies are accidental. Myths abound concerning pregnancy and birth control, with many girls thinking "it won't happen to me." Contrary to public perceptions of teen promiscuity, most are inexperienced and have sex very sporadically. Very few teens get pregnant in order to "hook a man." And many case managers believe that the tendency for teen mothers to explain their decision as a wish to have someone to love and who loves them is more often an afterthought of the pregnancy, rather than a plan. A prime incentive for some teen mothers to bear children once they are pregnant may be that so many other girls have done it.

Where are the fathers? Very few comprehensive studies have been conducted about the backgrounds of teen fathers. AFLP records indicate that they are usually not teens at all, ranging in age from about 19 to 24. Three-quarters of teen mothers report that the paternity of their infant has been established with the father. But only 19 percent report that relationship to the district attorney's office. Without legal paternity, attempts to make child support claims are frustrated. The fathers' involvement with the childbirth is extremely minimal: 31.1 percent. Frequently, their relationship to the mother has ended by the time the infant is born. After giving birth, only 11.6 percent of AFLP's teen mothers reported a continued tie to the father.

At present there are few support mechanisms to pull in the father and few programs which serve them. The scarce resources available for teen pregnancy are devoted almost exclusively to teen mothers. The role of the father remains largely unknown.

Why a "tragedy?" Teen pregnancy is a tragic reflection of lives which have been offered too few options for the future and which as a result of childbirth are all too often permanently disabled. The dependence of a young child or children on a lone young, poor mother puts enormous strains on the parent's ability to improve poor academic and vocational skills. Additionally, managing the demands of motherhood may isolate a young mother from the access to information and contacts on which most job seekers rely. The jobs she is capable of finding often provide few if any benefits, pay below-poverty level wages, and offer no childcare. Unstable living arrangements, inadequate health care, and lack of good nutrition further combine to induce young mothers toward dependence on a web of public assistance. The world into which so many children of teenage mothers are born seems mired in deficits, and the cycle continues.

But a teen pregnancy or birth need not be a tragedy. Programs that provide support services to teens at this crucial stage have demonstrated that coordinated approaches that are comprehensive and provide multiple services either directly or through networking with other agencies can help young people to overcome the deficit of a pregnancy and reverse the downward spiral toward persistent poverty. These same approaches have also proven successful in pre-

venting teenage pregnancies. The tragedy is that inadequate resources are preventing the majority of Oakland's needy youth from obtaining these proven services.

The concentration of births to teenagers in Oakland is shown on the removable map in the back folder of this report.

D. Role Models

In Chapter 2 we discussed the growing numbers of poor families headed by women. The absence of a father in the homes of so many poor children puts tremendous economic and social obstacles in the developmental path of adolescents.

Economically, the low earnings capacity of single mothers and the high costs of essential services present great difficulty in sustaining a family. Among Blacks, female-headed families are just as likely to have incomes below poverty as not. Yet they comprise fully 80 percent of all poor families.

Socially, adolescents who grow up without a male presence lack a critical reference point as they pursue their own senses of identity. The example set by absent fathers affects males and females alike, too often serving as a negative role.

More than a third of all Oakland's children and youth under 18 lived in homes with no father present in 1980, as Table 4-7 indicates. Again, the highest percentages for poor and non-poor alike occur in Black households. About one in four white or Hispanic children live in fatherless homes; only 11.8 percent of Asian youth do. But half of all Black children and youth live with one parent, and about half of those – slightly more than for all other groups – are poor.

Missing from the poor adolescent's world is a diversity of positive role models. This chapter has touched on several primary areas of an adolescent's day: school, after school, work experience, sexual activity, and home. In all of these, the example of caring, supportive, and knowledgeable adults helps adolescents to focus their interests and put their strengths in motion.

Table 4-7: Children Without Fathers at Home and Poverty Levels, 1980

	Total kids in single parent families	# of those in poverty	% of those in poverty
Black	26,031	13,541	52%
White	3,312	955	28.8%
Native American	—	244	30.1%
Hispanic	2,519	1,193	47.4%
Asian	781	352	45.1%
City Total	31,822	15,735	49.4%

Source: 1980 U.S. Census

Adult role models for young adults also serve as a critical perspective on the future.

Fully 38 percent of the single parents of Oakland's poorest teens are themselves high school dropouts. While there is no proven correlation between parents dropping out bearing children who ultimately drop out, there is evidence that a home environment where emphasis is put on educational achievement and discipline is fertile ground for student achievers. The same is true for work experience. When the majority of adults at home or in a teenager's immediate milieu either do not work at all or engage in illegal profitmaking, the incentives to try other avenues shrink. When options seem so limited for poor adults, it is not surprising that adolescents so eager to become adults seek out short-term, gratifying alternatives, such as pregnancy.

A large part of the work necessary to reconstruct the life options of Oakland's teenagers in poverty demands not only sustained, well-designed strategies to strengthen the institutions where poor youth interact. It also means further

developing the strong base of caring adult role models whose experience and encouragement facilitate the young person's implementation of a plan for life.

Three Futures

Oakland's poorest neighborhoods are brimming with dreams and aspirations. For many of its teens, however, there is not enough faith in themselves and support from others to build that critical bridge between reality and dreams. For some, like Katrina and Henry, the support of a few caring adults is enough to help them realize their own potential and to take hold of options. But for others, like James, turning dreams into reality, even with help, will take time.

James Edwards, 21, is starting again, two years after moving to Oakland and leaving behind a legacy of fighting, hustling, and failing in school. Succeeding hasn't been as easy as being bright, he's discovered, and a faster life still tempts him. But James wants more than the streets can offer him. Getting it will be difficult. Then again, as James says, "It's difficult, you know, to grow up."

For Katrina Washington, 18, an unexpected pregnancy on top of an already difficult home situation proved to be a decisive event. The pregnancy destroyed what was left of her relationship with her mother and she was asked to leave Oakland High once she began to show. Eventually, she had to leave home, too. Katrina was faced with getting the medical care she needed to have a healthy baby and the education and training she would need to support that baby.

Henry Mitchell, 18, is a gifted artist. He describes his four sisters as "normal working people," but two of his brothers are in prison for drug-related crimes; a third is "struggling." Nearly all of his male cousins had been in jail by the time they turned 18, and a close friend was shot dead over drugs at 15. Finding and developing his artistic talents would require overcoming the tremendous temptation of falling into a dangerous life of easy money.

All three of these adolescents are learning what it will take from themselves to realize their dreams, step by step, whatever the obstacles. They are fortunate to have found caring adult role models to help guide them toward adulthood. As individuals each is unique. They are among Oakland's finest, and they can be found throughout its neighborhoods.

James: Settling Down To A Chess Game

When James Edwards first came to East Oakland a few years ago with his family, he immediately felt the sting of being an outsider in a tough place and unemployed without a high school diploma. Many miles

from his hometown of Indianapolis, he was determined to use his quick mind, to get his degree, and to one day go into advertising. But he was also tempted by the street and by impulses which had gotten him into trouble over the years.

"I was a clown," James admits with a coy grin, reflecting on his past. "Not just a class clown, but a straight up-and-down clown."

Luckily for James, the East Oakland Youth Development Center was located a block away. Over the course of a year, James participated in a young men's group and a job training workshop, played sports, and – most importantly – received his G.E.D. Yet nothing benefited James as much as the friendship he developed with counselor Donna Rhinehart.

"Every child should dream," says Donna, reflecting on James. "But ours dream too much. They have trouble dealing with reality. They're fantasizing all the time."

With Donna's patient support, James is taking slow steps toward disciplining himself. He's no longer hustling or gambling as he once did back in the Midwest, but he dropped out of a business program that might have been his ticket to advertising. Right now, he's working two minimum-wage jobs in fast food restaurants until he can decide his next move.

Most importantly, James is learning to see life like the chess games his mother taught him as a child. "I'm learning more and more to use chess game strategies instead of my physical ability to do harm to somebody. I'm learning to go around obstacles instead of running up against them. Chess is a lot like life," he says.

Katrina: A New Family and a Beginning

After having to leave school and home, Katrina had to rely more and more on Billy, the father of her child. "He was different," Katrina recalls. "When I met him, he started giving me money, taking me out, and buying me clothes. That's what I call different. I was surprised. If I had gotten pregnant by anybody else, they would have left me right afterwards."

For a short time after leaving her mother's home, Katrina lived with an aunt in another part of town. But unable to get Medi-Cal coverage for prenatal care, Katrina could see a doctor only sporadically during her entire pregnancy. She went to the doctor when Billy could pay for it. Finally, Katrina moved a second time to live with Billy's family in West Oakland.

On the advice of a friend, Katrina went

to summer school at Booth Memorial Center, which provides a variety of services for pregnant teens. When she returned to Booth in the fall – then eight months pregnant – she was referred to a case manager, Deborah Moutry.

"Katrina is a very remarkable person," says Deborah who feels a special bond with Katrina, her very first client. "When she came in she was depressed and at her last wits."

Weekly visits turned into twice weekly and then frequent home visits. Katrina's biggest problem revolved around her total lack of income and the difficulty she was having in getting health coverage and social services. Both Katrina and Deborah now laugh about the constant obstacles they hurdled together in securing Medi-Cal and AFDC, which actually arrived after the baby's birth. "She helped me a lot, a whole bunch," Katrina recalls.

When the child was born in October 1986, Billy named her Destiny. With Destiny's birth, explains Deborah, things looked up for Katrina. "Her affect did a total turnabout. Instead of complaining about what happened, she was no longer the victim. She was talking about future plans and what she could do for her baby. She asked about everything," Deborah recalls.

Since then, Katrina graduated from McClymonds High School after completing credits at night. She worked last summer and now attends the local Healds College for secretarial skills. Billy has continued in his job, and together they have saved enough to move into their own place and to provide childcare for Destiny. For all this, Katrina received Booth's outstanding teen parent award last year. The inscription is simple: "Dare to Dream."

Henry: A Self-Designed Future

Henry tells of a pair of incidents in his East Oakland neighborhood that nearly changed him. In the first, he and a friend stopped at a corner one night waiting for the light to change when cars began to pull up by the curb. People got out with rolls of money in their hands mistaking Henry and his friend for dealers.

"That was my greatest temptation," he recalls with a bit of a smile.

But because of the second incident, the temptation didn't last. "One of my brothers caused our house to get shot up," says Henry. He recalls how the family moved carefully

around the rooms for weeks afterwards. "That was bullets. Bullets! That was crazy. When you get involved in drugs, you're endangering the lives of everybody around you. It really opened my eyes," says Henry.

While increased drug activity continued to sweep up his brothers and friends, Henry made his way to the art room at the East Oakland Boys Club. There his award-winning silkscreens now adorn the walls. And it was there in 1980 that Henry met Bill Mayfield, the art director and current manager who simply calls himself a "young man person." Henry recalls that he "never actually knew anybody who could paint like Bill and wanted to try it."

Bill and Henry latched on to each other, both excited about the other's talent. Bill opened the world for Henry and the other boys by taking them on trips to museums and studios in Oakland and San Francisco. "He showed us a whole new way of looking at painting," says Henry. "It wasn't just looking, it was analyzing."

Henry, in turn, became a role model for Bill's new program in silk-screening t-shirts and posters for sale. "Henry was one of my first guys to get into the marketing aspects and the printing of t-shirts, the styles and presentation," explains Bill. "He was dominant in every aspect of the craft shop and a real help to others."

Over the years, Henry came to embody the dreams that Bill and the rest of the staff had for the clubhouse. He learned the rules of the place, playing in the gameroom, studying in the library, and participating in the awareness classes. But it was Henry's mastery of the art room that revealed his excellence as well as his purpose.

His works have won him several awards. His silk-screens of Paul Robeson have garnered him first prize in both the regional and national Boys Club art contest.

In 1986 he was named the Oakland Boy of the Year.

After graduating from Castlemont High School, Henry applied to the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York and was accepted, but chose not to go at that time. Instead, he attends the College of Alameda, majoring in apparel design. He dreams of becoming a great designer one day.

Henry is also reflective about many of the young guys around him, many of whom have untapped talent, he says. "They want the money now, not to go to school for another two to four years," he says. "They don't know what I know, just gotta have the quick money." Yet Henry knows he is a role model for some. "When you're not involved in drugs and you're making something of yourself, you're something to gasp at," he says.

Henry has decided that if he is readmitted to the Fashion Institute in New York he will attend. Asked how his art design reflects the kind of person he is, Henry stops and thinks.

"I stand for quality," he says.

Conclusion

Service providers in Oakland have demonstrated repeatedly that careful, targeted, coordinated approaches can effectively reach those most in need. Programs designed and run by health providers in Oakland have demonstrated that the provision of comprehensive prenatal care for high-risk women increases birthweight and reduces the incidence of infant mortality. Yet, as stated in this report, many high-risk women in Oakland are not receiving comprehensive or any form of prenatal care in a timely manner.

As this report has pointed out, there are schools in Oakland, serving poor children, that are producing outstanding results. Other schools in Oakland are moving in that direction. But to provide quality education to all of Oakland's children, more resources and smaller classrooms are needed.

Similarly, in the schools and in the community there are programs providing coordinated, targeted, comprehensive services to Oakland's youth. These service providers are reversing the incidence of teenage pregnancy and providing true bridges to self-sufficiency. But these services are reaching only a small number of those who need them. There are job training programs in Oakland that are doing an excellent job of providing meaningful job training that leads to good paying employment; but again, there are too many youths who do not have access to these essential programs.

This report is offered to the Oakland community by the Urban Strategies Council to assist government agencies, the business community, community-based organizations, volunteers, and all of Oakland to develop the data, resources, and strategies that will expand these services and reduce the threat of persistent poverty. This report documents that there are major discrepancies in the opportunities available to our children. Some are receiving basic, even exemplary services and opportunities through their parents or through community or government agencies. But an alarming number are going without the attention that will provide them with the basics. Such a situation is not only unjust but could threaten the anticipated prosperity and stability that Oakland's leadership is pursuing.

This document describes the cycle of poverty threatening to entrap Oakland's children and youth and identifies those vulnerable points in the cycle where targeted, comprehensive interventions can reverse the trend toward persistent poverty and prevent its further entrenchment. Those areas are:

1. Family Income: We must develop and support efforts to increase the incomes of poor families in ways that will lead to self-sufficiency. This means concentrating intensely on ways to increase the earnings of poor females heading families since the majority of poor children live in these families. California's welfare-to-work initiative offers some opportunities in this area but it will not do to merely force poor women to work for their welfare checks. We must create partnerships between businesses, government, and job training agencies to connect welfare recipients to jobs that lead to higher incomes and

pathways out of poverty. We must also encourage, support, and create efforts to employ and increase the earnings of at-risk males who with well-paying jobs could contribute financially and emotionally to Oakland's poor children.

2. Child Health: We must support efforts to reduce the incidence of low birthweight. Over the years, Oakland has provided impressive initiatives to improve birth outcomes. Results from those efforts have guided many throughout the nation to workable strategies in this area. But more needs to be done.

Alameda County has formed the Infant Mortality Oversight Committee that is coordinating outreach and delivery of prenatal care. It is also exploring ways to expand the numbers of prenatal care providers. With community-wide support, this effort, combined with the outstanding work of community clinics and other providers, can make a difference.

3. Education: All efforts to halt the threat of continued poverty will fail if we do not improve the educational achievement of the young. We must expand the availability of quality childcare and preschool programs and demand, work for, and help build excellence in our schools, targeting those in which poor children are concentrated.

4. Youth Opportunity: We must save the youth. Our school improvement efforts will help, but we must also prepare young people for productive lives. The youth need to be connected to information and services. Opportunities to work and receive job training are essential. College readiness activities need to reach not just the "already college-bound" but the "could be college-bound" also. We need more mentorship efforts, supported by the money and management that can make them effective. Afterschool programs not only remove the youth from the constant lure of the streets, these programs allow the young to find out what they enjoy and can do well. In this area, churches, businesses, and community groups can play a key role, along with government. Mostly, the young need help in expanding their life options.

We can develop comprehensive strategies to invest in the future generation of Oakland's residents. To accomplish this, we must all work together and build on our strengths. We can build a community that provides for every child.

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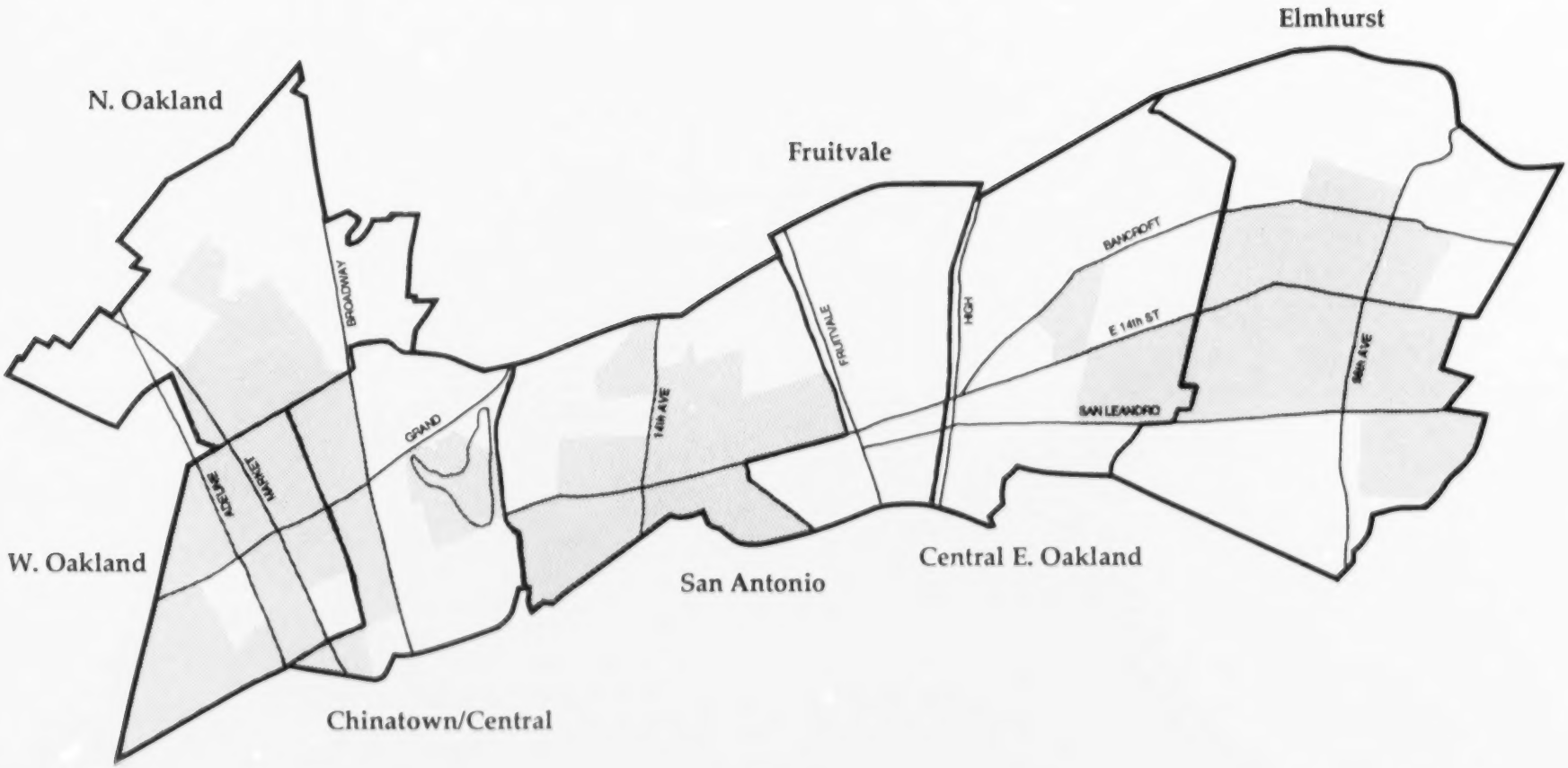
Turn page to view maps.


Elmhurst
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GRAND
14th AVE
ADELINE
MARKET
W. Oakland
San Antonio
Central E. Oakland
Chinatown/Central

How to Use the Transparent Maps

The transparent maps in this pocket can be placed over the base map to see the concentration of risk factors in high-poverty areas. The maps depict only the seven community development districts, excluding the hill areas. The base map on the opposite page darkens those census tracts in which 30 percent or more of the families there live below the poverty level (based on 1980 Census data).

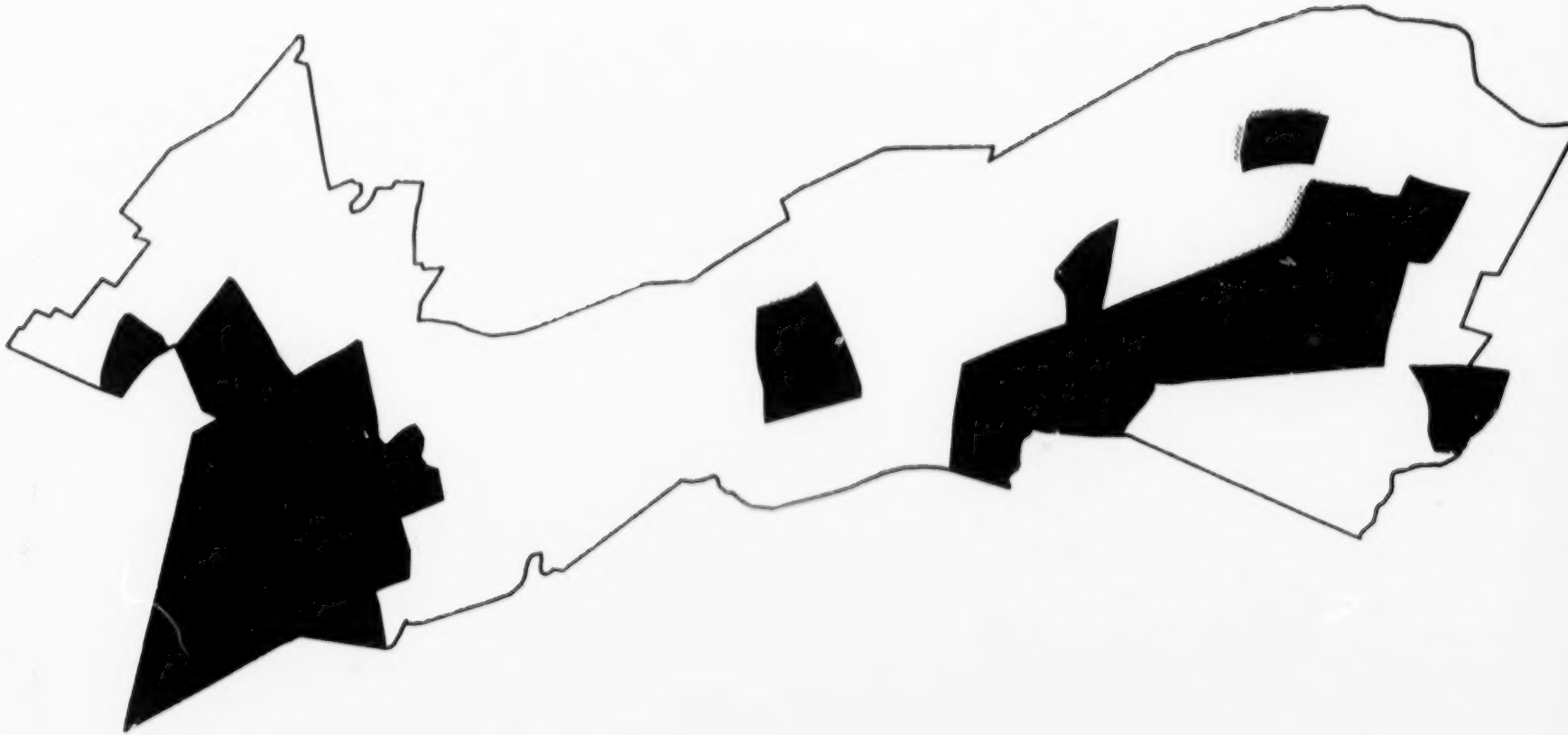
The Low Birthweight transparency indicates census tracts in which 11 percent or more of all births were of low birthweight (less than five and one-half pounds). The data are based on the average for the years 1981-1984. The Alameda County rate during those years was 7 percent.

The Birth to Teenagers transparency is also based on averages for the years 1981-1984. It indicates census tracts in which 9.5 percent or more of all births were to teens 17 and under. The Alameda County average for those years is 3.2 percent, and for Blacks it is 7.2 percent.

The Teen Idleness transparency indicates those census tracts in which 60 percent or more of 16- to 19-year-olds out of school (including high school graduates) are also unemployed or not in the labor force, i.e. idle. The Oakland average for "idleness," based on the 1980 Census, is 51 percent for high school graduates and 68 percent for non-graduates.

The AFDC Recipiency transparency is based on 1986 data. It represents those census tracts in which 50 percent or more of all families receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

AFDC Recipiency



Teen Idleness
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Idleness
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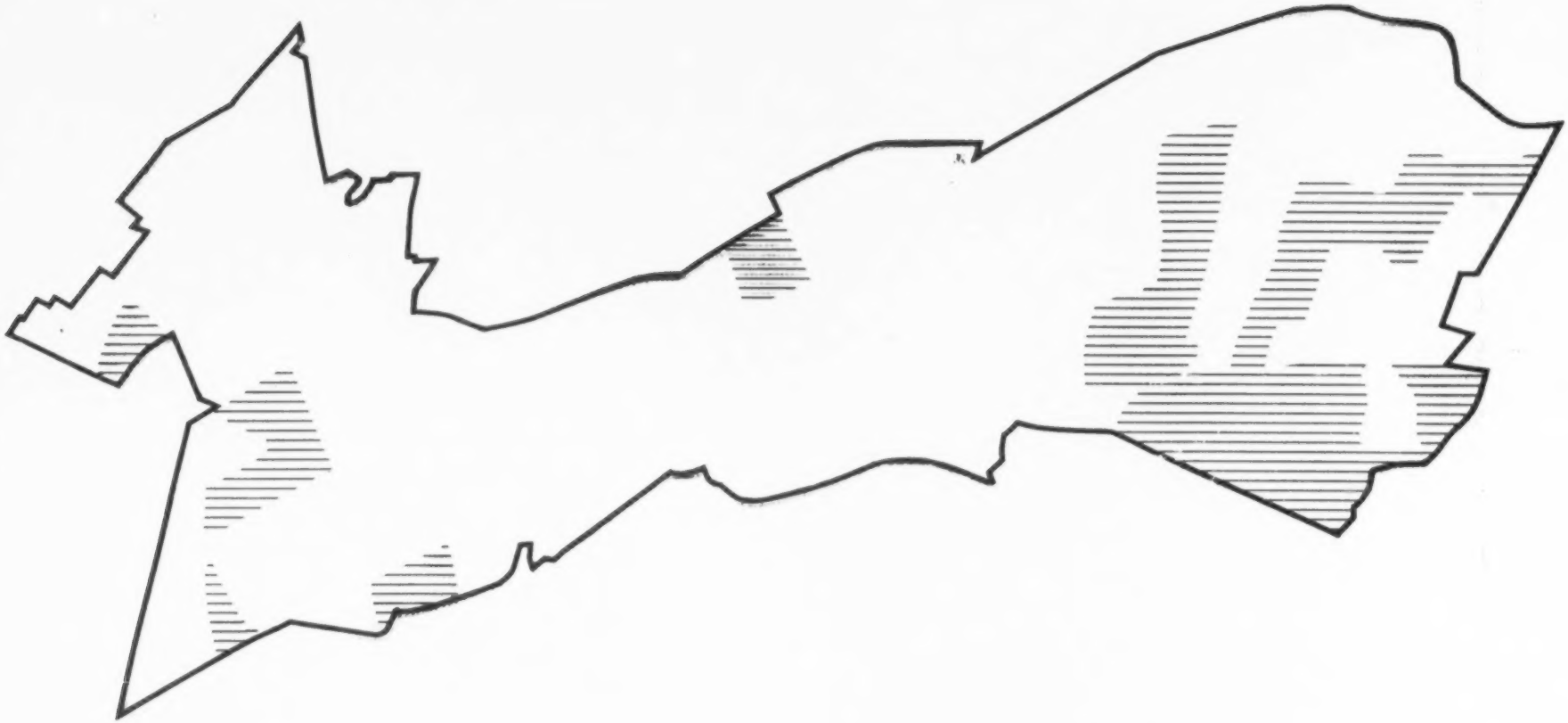
Births to Teenagers under 18



Teen Births

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